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FRIEND of VIRTUE & reclamer from ERROR.

THE
HISTORY
OF
WOMEN,

FROM THE
EARLIEST ANTIQUITY, TO THE PRESENT TIME;
GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF ALMOST EVERY INTER-
ESTING PARTICULAR CONCERNING THAT
SEX, AMONG ALL NATIONS, ANCIENT
AND MODERN.

WITH A COMPLETE INDEX.

By William Alexander, M. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME SECOND.

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1796.

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T H E

History of Women.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Delicacy and Chastity.

OF all the virtues which adorn the female character, and enable the sex to steal imperceptibly into the heart, none are more conspicuous than that unaffected simplicity and shyness of manners which we distinguish by the name of delicacy. In the most rude and savage states of mankind, however, delicacy has no existence; in those where politeness and the various refinements connected with it are carried to excess, delicacy is discarded, as a vulgar and unfashionable restraint on the freedom of good breeding.

To illustrate these observations, we shall adduce a few facts from the history of mankind. Where the human race have little other culture than what they receive from nature, and hardly any other ideas but such as she dictates; the two sexes live together, unconscious of almost any restraint on their words or on their actions: Diodorus Siculus mentions several nations among the antients, as the Hylophagi, and Iethiophagi, who had scarcely any cloathing, whose language was exceedingly imperfect, and

whose manners were hardly distinguishable from those of the brutes which surrounded them. The Greeks, in the heroic ages, as appears from the whole history of their conduct, delineated by Homer and their other poets and historians, were totally unacquainted with delicacy. The Romans, in the infancy of their empire, were the same. Tacitus informs us, that the ancient Germans had not separate beds for the two sexes, but that they lay promiscuously on reeds or on heath along the walls of their houses; a custom still prevailing in Lapland, among the peasants of Norway, Poland, and Russia; and not altogether obliterated in some parts of the Highlands of Scotland and of Wales. In Terra del Fuego, on several places of the Gold Coast, in the Brazils, and a variety of other parts, the inhabitants have hardly any thing to cover their bodies, and scarcely the least inclination to conceal any natural action from the eyes of the public. In Otaheite, to appear naked, or in cloaths, are circumstances equally indifferent to both sexes: nor does any word in their language, nor any action to which they have an inclination, seem more indelicate or reprehensible than another. Such are the effects of a total want of culture: and effects not very dissimilar are in France and Italy produced from a redundancy of it; delicacy is laughed out of existence as a silly and unfashionable weakness.

Among people holding a middling degree, or rather perhaps something below a middle degree, between the most uncultivated rusticity, and the most refined politeness, we find female delicacy in its highest perfection. The Japanese are but just emerged some degrees above savage barbarity, and in their history we are presented by Kempfer, with an instance of the effect of delicacy, which perhaps has not a parallel in any other country. A lady

being at table in a promiscuous company, in reaching for something that she wanted, accidentally broke wind backwards, by which her delicacy was so much wounded, that she immediately arose, laid hold on her breasts with her teeth, and tore them till she expired on the spot. In Scotland, and a few other parts of the north of Europe, where the inhabitants are some degrees farther advanced in politeness than the Japanese; a woman would be almost as much ashamed to be detected going to the temple of Cloacina, as to that of Venus. In England, to go in the most open manner to that of the former, hardly occasions a blush on the most delicate cheek. At Paris, we are told that a gallant frequently accompanies his mistress to the shrine of the goddess, stands sentinel at the door, and entertains her with bon mots, and protestations of love all the time she is worshipping there; and that a lady when in a carriage, whatever company be along with her, if called upon to exonerate nature, pulls the cord, orders the driver to stop, steps out, and having performed what nature required, resumes her seat without the least ceremony or discomposure. The Parisian women, as well as those in many of the other large towns of France, even in the most public companies make no scruple of talking concerning those secrets of their sex, which almost in every other country are reckoned indelicate in the ears of the men: nay, so little is their reserve on this head, that a young lady on being asked by her lover to dance, will without blush or hesitation, excuse herself on account of the impropriety of doing so in her present circumstances. The Italians, it is said, carry their indelicacy still farther: women even of character and fashion, when asked a favour of another kind, will with the utmost composure decline the proposal on account of being at present under a course of medicine for the cure of

a certain disorder. When a people have arrived at that point in the scale of politeness, which entirely discards delicacy, the chastity of their women must be at a low ebb; for delicacy is the sentinel that is placed over female virtue, and that sentinel once over-come, chastity is more than half conquered.

From these observations, a question of the most difficult determination arises. Is the female delicacy natural or artificial? if natural, it should be found in the highest perfection in those states where mankind approach the nearest to nature; if artificial, it should be most conspicuous in states the most artificially polished. But notwithstanding what we related in the last section, it appears to be regulated by no general or fixed law in either. The inhabitants of the coast of New Zealand are perhaps as little cultivated as any on the globe, and yet their women were ashamed to be seen naked even at a distance by the English. In Otaheite, where they are considerably more polished, we have already seen that they are conscious of no such shame. ‘With
‘ the most innocent look,’ says Hawkesworth, ‘ Obe-
‘ rea their queen and several others, on going to
‘ meet another chief of the island, first uncovered
‘ their heads, and then their bodies as low as the
‘ waist.’ Nor can privacy,’ adds he, ‘ be much
‘ wanted among a people who have not even an
‘ idea of indecency, and who gratify every appetite
‘ and passion before witnesses, with no more sense
‘ of impropriety than we feel when we satisfy ‘ our
‘ hunger at the social board.’ We have seen that in France and Italy, which are reckoned the politest countries in Europe, women set themselves above shame and despise delicacy; but in China, one of the politest countries in Asia, and perhaps not even in this respect behind France or Italy, the case is

quite otherwise : no being can be so delicate as a women, in her dress, in her behaviour, and conversation ; and should she ever happen to be exposed in any unbecoming manner, she feels with the greatest poignancy the awkwardness of her situation, and if possible covers her face that she may not be known. In the midst of so many discordant appearances, the mind is perplexed, and hardly can fix upon any cause to which delicacy, that chiefest ornament of the fair sex, can be ascribed : should we ascribe it to custom only, we would do violence to our own inclinations, as we would willingly trace it to a nobler source. In prosecuting this attempt, let us attend to the whole of the animal creation ; let us consider it attentively, and wherever it falls under our observation, it will discover to us that in the female there is a greater degree of delicacy or coy reserve than in the male : is not this a proof that through the wide extent of the creation, the seeds of delicacy are more liberally bestowed upon females than on males ? And do not the facts which we have mentioned prove, that in the human genius these seeds require some culture to expand, and still more to bring them to perfection ; whereas, on the other hand, too much culture actually destroys them altogether ; as plants may be destroyed in a hot bed by too much heat, which by a moderate degree of it would have arrived to the highest perfection.

Allowing then, that delicacy is a virtue planted by the hand of nature in the female mind, let us take a view of the progress of this virtue, which makes so distinguishing a part of the character of that sex whose history we are endeavouring to elucidate.

In the remotest periods of which we have any historical account, we find that the women had a deli-

cacy to which the other sex were strangers. Rebecca veiled herself when she first approached to Isaac her future husband, and in those ages it would seem that even prostitution was too delicate to shew itself openly, for Tamar, when she personated an harlot, covered herself with a veil, which appears from the story to have been a part of the dress worn in those days by women of that profession. Many of the fables of antiquity, while they paint in the most striking colours the profligacy of manners, point out at the same time that delicacy was a latent principle in the female mind, which often shewed itself in spite of manners, customs, and every other disadvantage under which it laboured. Of this kind is the fable of Actæon and Diana. Actæon being a famous hunter, was in the woods with his hounds beating for some game, when accidentally spying Diana and her nymphs bathing in a river, he stole silently into a neighbouring thicket that he might have a nearer view of them; when the goddess discovering him, was so affronted at his audacity, and so much ashamed to have been seen naked, that she in revenge immediately transformed him into a stag, and set his own hounds upon him, who soon overtook and devoured him.

Even among the Lydians, a people who were highly debauched, it appears that female delicacy was far from being totally extinguished; Candaules, one of their kings, being married to a lady of exquisite beauty, was perpetually boasting of her charms to his courtiers, and at last, to satisfy his favourite Gyges that he had not exaggerated the description, he took the dangerous and indelicate resolution of giving him an opportunity of seeing her naked. To accomplish this, Gyges was conveyed by the king into a secret place, where he might see the queen

dress and undress, from whence, however, as he retired, she accidentally spied him, but taking no notice of him for the present, she only set herself to consider the most proper method of revenging her injured modesty, and punishing her indelicate husband; having resolved how to proceed, she sent for Gyges, and told him that as she could not tamely submit to the stain which had been offered to her honour, she insisted that he should expiate his crime either by his own death or that of the king, that two men might not be living at the same time who had thus seen her in a state of nature. Gyges, after some fruitless remonstrances, performed the latter, married the queen, and mounted the throne of Lydia. Besides the fables and historical anecdotes of antiquity, their poets seldom exhibited a female character in its loveliest form, without adorning it with the graces of modesty and delicacy; hence we may infer, that these qualities have not only been always essential to virtuous women in civilized countries, but have been also constantly praised and esteemed by men of sensibility.

Plutarch, in his treatise, entitled, *The virtuous Actions of Women*, mentions several anecdotes which strongly favour our idea of delicacy being an innate principle in the female mind; the most striking is that of the young women of Milesia, many of whom, about that time of life, when nature giving birth to restless and turbulent desires inflames the imagination, and astonishes the heart at the sensation of wants which virtue forbids to gratify, to free themselves from the conflict between nature and virtue, laid violent hands on themselves; the contagion becoming every day more general, to put a stop to it, a law was made, ordaining that every one who committed that crime should be brought naked to

the market place and publicly exposed to the people; and so powerfully did the idea of this delicate exposure, even after death, operate on their minds, that from thenceforth not one of them ever made an attempt on her own life.

There are so many evils attending the loss of virtue in women, and so greatly are minds of that sex depraved when they have deviated from the path of rectitude, that their being generally contaminated may be considered one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall a state, as it in time destroys almost every public virtue of the men. Hence all wise legislators, especially of republics, have strictly enforced upon the sex a particular purity of manners; and not satisfied that they should abstain from vice only, have required them even to shun every appearance of it. Such, in some periods, were the effects of the laws of the Romans, and such were the effects of these laws, that if ever female delicacy shone forth in a conspicuous manner, we are of opinion it was among those people, after they had worn off much of the barbarity of their first ages, and before they become contaminated by the wealth and manners of the nations which they plundered and subjected: then it was that we find many of their women surpassing in modesty almost every thing related by fable; and then it was that their ideas of delicacy were so highly refined, that they could not even bear the secret consciousness of an involuntary crime, and far less of having even tacitly consented to it. Of this nothing can be a stronger proof than the custom mentioned by Moses, of exposing to public view the tokens of a bride's virginity on the morning after her wedding night, to which we shall only add, that the price demanded by Saul for his daughter, when he gave her to David in marriage; a price the most

highly characteristic of the indelicate manners of the times. The Greeks themselves, who considered all the rest of the world as barbarians, were in delicacy hardly a few degrees above the instances just now mentioned; one can scarcely determine whether the comedies of Aristophanes or of Euripides are the most shocking to a modest ear. Martial, and even Horace, among the Romans were scarcely less indelicate, but they flourished at Rome during these periods when false refinement of manners had banished delicacy as a silly and unprofitable virtue, and when even law was so repugnant to decency, that a woman taken in adultery was prostituted in the public street to all comers, who were invited by the ringing of a bell to the abominable ceremony.

After the subversion of the Roman Empire, there arose among the barbarians an institution, which, as it was in a great measure directed to the defence and protection of women, created in them a dignity and delicacy unknown to any other age or people, and which perhaps will ever remain unparalleled in the history of mankind, unless chivalry or some similar institution be again revived; but as chivalry began to decline, delicacy declined also along with it, till at last both sexes assumed a rudeness of manners and of dress, which for several centuries disgraced Europe, and required a series of ages and of efforts to rub off and polish to any decent degree of refinement.

Such as we have now seen was the state of delicacy among the antients, and among the inhabitants of Europe; when we leave Europe, and colonies settled by Europeans, we find it a virtue in most other places hardly taken notice of or cultivated; we shall therefore turn our attention from delicacy, which we

consider only as an out-work to chastity, and make a few observations on chastity itself. But as we have already shewn the state and situation of this virtue among the greater part both of the ancients and moderns, we shall not again enter upon that subject, but confine ourselves to pointing out the various methods which in divers places and periods have been, and still are made use of to preserve, encourage, and defend that virtue.

Such has always been the constitution of human nature, and mode of governing, that the legislators of every country, except China, have constantly held out terrors to hinder from the commission of vice, but seldom or never offered rewards for the practice of virtue; the reason may be, that the vicious are few in number, and punishments cheap; whereas the virtuous are many, and premiums so costly, that no government could afford to bestow a reward on each of them; and, besides the moral virtues, not only reward us themselves with peace of mind in this world; but have annexed to them the promises of a still more ample reward in that which is to come. When we consider these reasons, it is not surprising to find that chastity, upon which all polished states have set the highest value, has never been encouraged by any positive institution in its favour; while its opposite vice has, by every well regulated government, been branded with a greater or less degree of infamy, according to the ideas which such government had, of the duties of religion and morality, and to the love which it entertained of rectitude and order. Wherever good laws are established, tending to enforce a decent propriety of manners, every woman, who deviates from chastity, forfeits almost entirely the society of her own sex, and of the most worthy and regular part of ours; and, what is of

infinitely greater consequence, she forfeits almost all chance of entering into that state, which women have so many natural, as well as political reasons, to determine them to wish for more than the men; and if she has any small degree of chance left of entering into it, she must do it with a partner below her rank and station in life; and even thus matched, she is liable to have the follies and frailties of her former conduct thrown up to her on every occasion, which gives birth even to the slightest matrimonial difference.

These and others of the same nature, are the punishments which every wise legislature has inflicted on the breach of chastity in unmarried women. We shall see afterward, that almost every people, whether civilized or savage, have treated this crime in married women with much greater severity; subjecting them not only to several kinds of public shame and indignity, but even to a variety of corporal, and often to capital punishments. But as every severity and every punishment, has been found too weak to prevail against the vice of incontinence; especially among people of soft and voluptuous manners, under the influence of a warm sun, and professing a religion, which lays no restraint upon the passions; the Easterns, where these causes most powerfully operate, have time immemorial endeavoured to secure the chastity of their women, by eunuchs and confinement.

At what period, or in what part of the world, some of the males of our species were first emasculated, in order to qualify them for guarding the objects of pleasures of the rest, is not perfectly known. The institution of a custom so barbarously unnatural, has, by some, been attributed to the in-

famous Semiramis ; but we are of opinion, that it was more likely to originate from the men than the women ; and, besides, we have reason to believe, that it was invented long before the time of Semiramis ; for Moses, in his code of legislation, expressly prohibits eunuchs from entering into the congregation ; and Manetho says, that the father of Sesostris, who lived near two hundred years before Moses, was assassinated by his eunuchs. In the days of Samuel, it seems to have been a general custom for the kings of the nations, who lived in the neighbourhood of the Israelites, to have eunuchs ; for we find this prophet, among the other reasons that he made use of to dissuade his people from chusing a king, telling them, ‘ that he would take their eunuchs to guard his women.’ The nature of our undertaking does not permit us to enquire, how it was first discovered that emasculation would fit men for the despicable employments to which such mutilated beings have generally been destined : it is sufficient for us to observe, that all the voluptuous nations of the East have constantly considered such beings, as so envious of the joys, which themselves were incapable of tasting, that they would exert every power to hinder others from tasting them also ; and hence have fixed upon them as the most proper guardians of female chastity : nor has their choice been improperly made ; for these wretches, losing every tender feeling for the other sex, along with the power of enjoying them, to ingratiate themselves with their jealous masters, not only debar them from every species of pleasure, under pretence of hindering them from that which is unlawful ; but treat them too often with the utmost severity.

While the empires and kingdoms of the East have been the most unsettled, and subject to the most fre-

quent and sudden revolutions, the manners and customs, like the mountains and rocks of the country, have been, time immemorial, permanent and unchangeable; and, at this day, exhibit nearly the same appearance that they did in the patriarchal ages; nor have these customs in any thing remained more fixed and unalterable, than in the use of eunuchs: every Eastern potentate, and every other person who can defray the expence, employs a number of those wretches to superintend his seraglio, and guard the chastity of his women; not only from every rude invader, but also from the effects of female association and intrigue: nor need we wonder at this, when we consider that into the women of this country are instilled no virtuous principles to enable them to defend themselves; that the men are taught by fashion and prompted by restraint to attack them as often as they have opportunity; that the women may therefore be considered in the same situation with regard to the men, as the defenceless animals of the field are to the beasts of prey which prowl around them; and that on these accounts, while the present constitution of the country remains unaltered, to guard the sex by this species of neutral beings, may not be so unnecessary as we in this country are apt to consider it.

There is in the human mind, a reluctance at sharing with another what we think necessary for ourselves, or what we greatly love and admire; hence, perhaps, arose the custom of fencing a field round with a ditch or a wall; and hence also, that of securing women by confinement, and guarding them by eunuchs. At what period of the world, or in what part of it, women were first put under confinement, is uncertain; we have, however, some reasons to believe, they were so used among the Philistines as

early as the patriarchal ages ; and even among the patriarchs themselves, we are told that the women had apartments in the back parts of the tents, into which it would seem that the men, or at least strangers, were never allowed to enter, and to which the women retired when any stranger approached. But though there might be some restraint upon the sex in these ages, it did certainly not amount to absolute confinement ; for we are informed, that all ranks and conditions of them were employed in the fields, and went out of the cities in the evenings to draw water ; and though separate apartments were contrived in the back parts of the tents for the women, as we have no accounts of their being confined to them, it is probable, that they served rather as retreats for decency, than as places of imprisonment.

Such was the state of women among the Israelites ; nor do they seem to have wanted their liberty at this time among the Egyptians, as appears from the story of the wife of Potiphar ; and in a subsequent period from that of Pharaoh's daughter, who was going with her train of attending nymphs to bathe in the Nile, when she found Moses among the reeds.

Were we to reason from principles only, on the origin of female confinement, we would most naturally derive it from jealousy ; if we reason from facts, it may have arisen from experience of the little security there was for the chastity of a weak and helpless woman, in the ages of rudeness and lawless barbarity ; thus many are of opinion, that the rape of Jacob's daughter by the Sechemites induced that patriarch to cause all his own women and those of his dependents to be shut up, lest another accident of the same nature should befall any of them. The

rapes of Io, and of Proserpine, gave birth perhaps to the confinement of women among the Greeks, and similar misfortunes might be followed by similar consequences among other nations. But whether the confinement of women originated from the rape of Dinah, we pretend not to determine ; of this, however, we are certain, that in length of time it became a custom among the Jews as well as their neighbours. King David had his wives confined ; for we are told that they went up to the house-top to see him march out against his son Absalom, which at this day is all the liberty allowed the women of the East, when they wish to be indulged with the sight of any public procession or show.

But though the women of Kings were at this period generally shut up, it would seem that those of private persons enjoyed more liberty ; for the same David sent and brought the wife of Uriah to his house, which all the authority with which he was invested could not have done without a tumult, had she been as strictly guarded, and the persons of women as sacred and inviolable as they are now in the East. When we come to the history of Solomon, we have plain accounts of a seraglio for the confinement of his women ; and in that of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, we learn that his seraglio was constituted not only on a plan of the severest confinement, but also of the most voluptuous sensuality. It would be needless to trace this custom downward to later periods, as it is well known that it became the common practice of almost all nations to the time of the Romans, who perhaps, were the first people who totally discarded it.

CHAPTER XVII.

The same Subject continued.

THE same causes which at first introduced particular manners and customs, are not always the only ones which continue or augment them; thus though seraglios and harams for the confinement of women probably originated from jealousy, or from the danger of exposing weak and defenceless beauty to men heated with lust and unrestrained by law, yet they soon after became an article of luxury and ostentation. The Asiatic monarchs and grandees vied with each other in having the most numerous and beautiful set of women, which conferred upon their master a lustre and dignity of the same nature as in modern times we suppose we obtain by a splendid equipage and a numerous retinue; but the Asiatics carried this matter still farther, and not content with having such a number of women in their possession, they made use of them to add to the long list of high-sounding titles, of which the Easterns are so exceedingly fond. The king of Birmagar among the rest of his pompous titles, is stiled the husband of a thousand wives. In this country where we are accustomed to make a show and parade of every thing which we imagine gives a lustre to our rank, or an addition to our fame, we cannot conceive what dignity an Eastern can derive from a number of beauties, while they are secluded from every mortal eye but his own; it is not, however, the displaying of these in all their charms that gives him this dignity; it is only necessary to have it known that they are in his seraglio, as it is in this country

not requisite that a miser should shew his store to acquire the reputation of being rich, but only that it be known that he has it in his possession.

In justification of seraglios and harems it has been by some alleged, that they are not so much places of confinement as of voluntary retreat from the rudeness and indecorum of the men; but those who argue in this manner must be but ill acquainted with the history of the East, and less with human nature; for we cannot suppose it consistent with those ideas and feelings with which we are endowed, that women should voluntarily shut up and seclude themselves from all the pleasures of liberty, and of social life, from the hope and joy of public admiration, without any other recompence than a small share of the favours of one man. Every human being has by nature an equal right to personal liberty, and none seem more tenacious of this right than the rude and uncultivated; it is probable, therefore, that the first efforts to confine women were resisted with all their strength and cunning; but the struggle proving ineffectual, custom at last stamped the sanction of justice upon what was at first only an illegal exertion of power; and now the sex, almost over half the world, tamely submit to be imprisoned like criminals, only because force and custom have barbarously combined against their liberty.

If jealousy was the original source of female confinement, when a wife really gave her husband cause to be jealous, he had at least a tolerable pretence for shutting her up; but to imprison wives in general, because some of them were found unfaithful, or young women in general, because upon some few individuals a rape had been committed, was a strange and unlawful exertion of power. The learned Mon-

tesquieu, in endeavouring to justify this exertion, says, ‘ That such is the force of climate in subliming the passions to an ungovernable height in countries where women are confined, that were they allowed their liberty, the attack upon them would always be certain, and the resistance nothing.’ Allowing to this reasoning all its force, does not justice demand that the attacker rather than the attacked should be confined ? But we venture to affirm, though in contradiction to so celebrated a genius, that such reasoning is not founded on nature; for this so much dreaded attack, and this feeble resistance, are neither of them the effect of climate only, but of restraint also, and would take place nearly in the same manner in Lapland as in Asia, were the sexes there as carefully kept asunder, and were there no other security for virtue but want of opportunity to be vicious; for such plainly is the disposition of human nature, that the greater obstacles thrown in the way of gratification, the greater are the efforts to overcome them; hence a woman who is masked or veiled more strongly attracts our attention, than one who is clothed in the ordinary manner, because, in the former case, we only see a small part of her charms, and creative fancy forms the most extravagant idea of all that is hid: hence, also men and women perpetually kept asunder, are for ever brooding over the joys which they would have tasted in the company of each other, and on this account, a man who perhaps in his whole life never has an opportunity of being alone with one of the other sex, if such an opportunity should perchance happen, never fails to make use of it by attacking her virtue; whereas were he to have frequent opportunities of this nature, his fancy would be less heated, he would set less value upon them, and use them with more moderation. These inferences are much strengthened by the fol-

lowing facts: a native of China, who lately resided some years in England, acknowledged, that, for some time after he arrived here, he had much difficulty in restraining himself from attacking every woman with whom he was left alone; and a Nun, who had escaped from a convent, imagined that every man who had an opportunity would assault her virtue, and though she had no inclination to have yielded, even sometimes felt a secret chagrin that she was disappointed.

In civilized nations, where the principles of morality are cultivated, when a mutual compact has been entered into between a man and a woman to abide by each other, the faith of this woman, and the sense of the obligation she has laid herself under, are considered as the securities of her virtue, without the use of any restrictive methods. This compact, however, is commonly a mutual one; whereas in countries where women are confined, the compact entered into between husband and wife, if it can be called a compact, is only an act of power on the part of the husband and parents of the bride, and of passive obedience on her part. The husband, therefore, has no great reason to expect that she will pay the same regard to this compact, as if it had been made by the voluntary agreement of all parties; sensible on this account, that her mind may be differently disposed of from her body, he secures the latter by perpetual confinement; which is all he can do. But this mode of treating women is the vilest indignity that can be offered to human beings, as it presupposes them neither endowed with virtue nor free agency, and places them in the same point of view with an unoccupied field, which yields itself indifferently to the possession of any one, who will be at the pains to secure and fence it. It likewise presupposes

the men to be with regard to the women, what they are to the wild beasts of the field, absolutely masters of every one whom they can lay hold of and detain in their custody. Ideas which we reprobate as inconsistent with human nature, when not warped by custom, or led astray by art.

It is natural to imagine, that we love and admire, and what, on these accounts, we cannot suffer to see in the company of others, we should be as much as possible in company with ourselves ; but the reverse is the case with the Asiatics ; though they will not allow their women the company of other men, they are seldom with them themselves : such conduct is, doubtless, one of those inconsistencies which too frequently mark the character of man ; nor is it less inconsistent, that one of the principal enjoyments of the paradise promised by Mahomet, should consist in the company of beautiful women ; while, in this world, the Mussulmen scarcely ever keep any company with the sex. But we are to consider, that where women are, from their infancy, confined as prisoners, they must be ignorant almost of every thing ; and, consequently, but illy qualified for the pleasures of conversation and of company ; and hence they are never treated as rational companions, nor as equals ; but as inferiors and children. The Persian women, according to Sir John Chardin, are not even consulted in the choice of their own clothes, nor in the propriety of their having new ones ; but are furnished with such as are thought necessary for them, in the same manner as we treat children.

In Turkey, Persia, and several other parts of Asia and Africa, the monarchs, having an absolute power, generally take from their subjects by force, such women as they find handsome, without any

regard to their rank, or their being married or single. The Grand Signior has a tribute of young girls annually paid to him by the Greeks, and some other of his tributary provinces; these are placed in apartments of the palace, which are separated from all intercourse with the rest, and are called the Seraglio; where they are guarded in the strictest manner by eunuchs. The gardens of this seraglio, which are fenced with high walls, and planted with rows of trees, to obstruct the sight, are the utmost limits to which they are allowed to go; except when some of them are carried along with their master, if he makes any excursion, or goes to war against an enemy; in which case, they are placed in close machines, on the backs of camels, and as much hid as if in the inmost recesses of the seraglio.

Besides the seraglio of the sultan, private persons have apartments in their houses, where they confine their women, called Harams. The Haram is in Turkey, as it was in ancient Greece; always in the back part of the house, and all the windows of it look into the garden. The apartments of the ladies, when the husband can afford it, are always elegantly furnished after their manner; and they want nothing to make life comfortable but society: they have numbers of beautiful female slaves to attend them, who divert them with vocal and instrumental music, dancing, and other amusements. In these Harams, women are not so closely confined as in the seraglio; they are sometimes suffered to go out; but then they must always be veiled and covered from head to foot with a long robe, called a forigee; which no woman of any rank is allowed to appear in the street without; and which is so exactly alike in all, that it is absolutely impossible to distinguish the features or person of one woman from another. The most

jealous husband cannot know even his own wife; and no man dare touch, or follow a woman in the street; so that the confinement of the women at Constantinople is not so rigid as some of our travellers would make us believe.

In a variety of parts of the Mogul empire, when the women are carried abroad, they are put into a kind of machine, like a chariot, and placed on the backs of camels, or in covered sedan chairs, and surrounded by a guard of eunuchs, and armed men, in such a manner, that a stranger would rather suppose the cavalcade to be carrying some desperate villain to execution, than employed to prevent the intrigues or escape of a defenceless woman. At home, the sex are covered with gauze veils, which they dare not take off in the presence of any man, except their husband, or some near relation. Over the greatest part of Asia, and in some places of Africa, women are guarded by eunuchs, made incapable of violating their chastity. In Spain, where the natives are the descendants of the Africans, and whose jealousy is not less strong than that of their ancestors, they, for many centuries, made use of padlocks to secure the chastity of their women; but finding these ineffectual, they frequently had recourse to old women, called *Gouvernantes*. It had been discovered, that men deprived of their virility, did not sometimes guard female virtue so strictly, as to be incapable of being bribed to allow another a taste of those pleasures they themselves were incapable of enjoying. The Spaniards, sensible of this, imagined, that vindictive old women were more likely to be incorruptible; as envy would stimulate them to prevent the young from enjoying those pleasures, which they themselves had no longer any chance for; but

all powerful gold soon overcame even this obstacle ; and the Spaniards, at present, seem to give up all restrictive methods, and to trust the virtue of their women to good principles, instead of rigour and hard usage.

Where there is no public virtue to confide in, besides the methods of Duennas, locks, eunuchs, and confinement, several others have been, and still are, practised in different countries, to preserve female chastity. Mr. More relates a singular method used for this purpose in the interior parts of Africa ; it is a figure to which they give the name of Mumbo Jumbo, in the shape of a man, and dressed in a long coat, made of the bark of a tree, and on its head a large tuft of straw : into this figure, which is usually about nine feet high, a man is introduced, who makes it walk along, speak what he pleases, or make such a horrid and frightful noise, as he thinks will best answer his purpose. This figure is kept carefully concealed by the men, and never comes abroad but in the night, when they want to settle some dispute with, or frighten the women into chastity and obedience. They persuade the women that it knows every thing ; they refer every thing to its decision, and it always decides in favour of the men ; but this is not all, it has a power of inflicting punishments on female delinquents, which it frequently does, by ordering them to be whipped. They are taught to believe, that it is particularly offended with them when they violate their chastity ; a crime which it will certainly discover, and as certainly punish. As soon as they hear it coming, they generally run away and hide themselves ; but are obliged by their husbands to return, though in fear and trembling, to its presence, and to do or suffer whatever it pleases to order them. How despicable must the under-

standing of these women be, if they are really thus deceived by so bungling a trick.

In almost all countries, where female chastity has been an object much regarded, some methods have been contrived to awaken the fears of the incontinent, as well as to flatter and reward the hopes of those who persevered in virtue; even the Jewish legislator, not thinking that the positive laws he had enacted against unchastity, and the punishments he had annexed to them, were fully strong to overcome every vicious inclination, instituted a mode of alarming their fears of a discovery, even when such discovery was above the power of mortal agency: this was the waters of jealousy, which a husband, who suspected the fidelity of his wife, obliged her, with some solemn ceremonies, to drink; and which she firmly believed would make her belly to swell and her thigh to rot, if she was guilty. When such was her belief, and when the husband had it constantly in his power to put her to the dreadful trial, a barrier was thereby formed against unchastity, stronger than all the other laws human and divine; and yet not so strong, but it was frequently by these daring women overleaped and disregarded.

Where jealousy is the ruling passion, and the men have no ideas that the incontinence of their women can be restrained by principle, by the hope of reward or the fear of punishment; and where the unsettled manner in which they live, does not allow them an opportunity of putting the sex under confinement; they practise other methods of a most despicable and odious nature, to secure the body, regardless perhaps how much the mind be contaminated. As soon as a female child is born, they unite by a kind of future those parts which nature has separated, leav-

ing just space enough for the natural discharges ; as the child grows, the parts adhere so closely, that at marriage they are obliged to be separated by an incision. Sometimes they only make use of a ring, and the married women as well as the virgins are subject to this outrage ; with this difference only, that the ring worn by the young women cannot be taken off, whereas that of the married women has a kind of padlock, of which the husband keeps the key. This custom obtains almost in every part of Arabia, but is most generally practised in that part of it known by the name of *Petræa*. The ancient Germans, and several other northern nations, sensible that chastity was most likely to be preserved inviolate by a decency of behaviour between the two sexes ; and supposing that this decency could not be properly maintained where familiarity was allowed, prohibited the men even from touching the women, and laid a fine upon them according to the part touched ; and in Great Britain, we find that there were laws of this nature even so late as the ninth century.

It is not a little curious to survey the various methods made use of in different parts of the world to accomplish the same end. In Poland, the chastity of young girls is endeavoured to be secured by a contrivance hardly less singular, though not so humiliating as some of those we have now mentioned : most of the young women belonging to the peasants have little bells fastened to various parts of their cloaths, to give notice to their mothers and other female gurdians where they go, that those may always have it in their power to detect them should they attempt to intrigue or secrete themselves from their view. Where women are no farther regarded than as the means of gratifying animal love, methods

like the forgoing may be necessary, or at least attended with little mischief to society or the peace of individuals; but where they are intended for the more exalted purposes of being friends and companions, they should be managed in a very different manner. Locks, spies, and bodily restrictions then become highly improper, as they tend only to debase their minds, corrupt their morals, and render them despicable; circumstances which ought to be guarded against with the utmost attention, as, where the mind is debased and contaminated, the body is not worth the trouble of preserving.

In all countries where the religion of Rome is established, chastity, and every female virtue which has any relation to it, are endeavoured to be preserved by the artifice of auricular confession; the institutors of which probably imagined, that unchastity was a crime which female delicacy would never allow any woman to divulge; and as damnation was infallibly annexed to the concealing any crime from the father confessor, it was consequently a crime which no woman would ever commit. But however well contrived this plan may appear, experience has fully demonstrated its futility, and that the professors of the catholic religion, notwithstanding this additional impediment in the way of incontinence, are in that respect nearly on a footing with the rest of their neighbours, who have no such stumbling block in their way.

This institution of auricular confession, in the light which we have just now considered it, lays an obstacle in the way of unchastity, by exposing it to public shame, which in all civilized countries is one of the strongest passions which mark the female character. But women are now become too cunning

to fall into the snare ; and while their actions of this kind remain private, it is presumable they seldom confess them. But as the exposure to public shame is one of the most powerful methods of laying hold of the minds of the sex, the laws of society, as well as those of religious institutions, have availed themselves of it, and made it, among every polished people, one of the severest parts of the punishment to which the female delinquent, who has departed from the path of rectitude, is exposed ; and consequently one of the greatest obstacles which can be thrown in the road to unchastity. This appears from the conduct of the women of Iceland, when the public shame attending incontinency was suspended on the following occasion. In the year one thousand seven hundred and seven, a great part of the inhabitants of Iceland having died of a contagious distemper, the king of Denmark, in order to re-people the country in a more expeditious manner than the common rules of procreation admitted of, made a law, authorising all young women to have each six bastards, without being exposed to any shame, or suffering the loss of reputation. This succeeded beyond the expectation of the monarch ; and the young women employed themselves so sedulously in the affair of population, that, in a few years, it was thought necessary to abrogate the law, lest the country should be overstocked with inhabitants, and that sense of shame annexed to unchastity, so much obliterated from the female breast, that neither law nor custom would be able afterwards to revive it. Were it not almost self-evident to every one, that this public shame attending female indiscretion, is one of the strongest motives to secure their chastity, we might prove it more fully from other circumstances. Nothing can be more certain, than that in those countries where no shame is fixed

to any action, there is no public chastity ; and that this virtue flourishes the most, where its contrary vices are branded with the very greatest degree of infamy.

But this public shame is only one of the many methods which we in this country make use of to secure the chastity of the sex. We call religion and morality to our aid ; religion holds out in the one hand rewards of the most glorious nature, and punishments not less dreadful in the other. Morality points out how much the order, peace, and good government of society are influenced by female chastity ; and how each of them are unhinged and destroyed by incontinence. Honour, likewise, comes in as an auxiliary, and holds up to their view the lustre and reputation which themselves and their families derive from their decency and regularity of conduct, and the stain and infamy which they bring upon both by lewdness and debauchery. Thus terrified by shame, by the loss of society, and by the forfeiting all chance of a husband suitable to their rank, and encouraged by religion, by morality, and honour, we trust such women as have arrived at the years of discretion to themselves, and experience fully demonstrates, that we place not our trust improperly ; and that those methods are far more prevalent than locks, bars, eunuchs, and all the other barbarous expedients that have been fallen upon, by nations who have not attained to sensibility enough to clap the padlock on the female mind instead of the body. But though we suffer women of experience to be the guardians of their own virtue, over the young and the giddy who have not attained to that degree of reason requisite for governing their passions, nor to that experience sufficient to direct them in the choice of a husband, custom has placed mo-

thers, and other female relations, who by time and observation have acquired more knowledge of the world, whereby they are enabled to steer their young pupils with safety over the dangerous rocks of youthful passion and inexperience.

The inhabitants of the southern and northern regions of the globe are in nothing more distinguishable from each other than the different methods of securing the chastity of their women. In the south, while every possible restriction is laid on the body, they have hardly made use of one single precept to bind the mind. In the north, while they have laid every possible restriction on the mind, the body is left entirely at liberty; and it is remarkable, that none of the religious systems of the south either offer rewards to encourage female chastity, or threaten punishments to deter them from incontinence.—While almost every religious system of the north has issued the most positive precepts against the indiscretion of the sex, and to a disobedience of these precepts annexed the most dreadful punishment; even Mahomedism, which is a compound of the religions of both hemispheres, terrifies not the female sinner with hell, or any future state where she shall suffer for her levities; all that she has to fear on this head, is the displeasure and correction of her husband. While in the Edda, or sacred records of the ancient Scandinavians, future punishments of the most tremendous nature are held over the head of the delinquent, ‘there is a place,’ says that book, ‘remote from the sun, the gates of which face the north; poison rains there through a thousand openings; this place is all composed of the carcases of serpents. There run certain torrents, in which are plunged the bodies of the perjurers, assassins, and those who

‘ seduce married women. A black-winged dragon
‘ flies incessantly round, and devours the bodies of
‘ the wretched who are there imprisoned.’ So far
their religion; the laws of almost all the northerns
constantly breathed the same spirit, and not satisfied
that their women should refrain from real unchastity
only, they would not even allow of any thing that
had the slightest appearance of indecorum, or that
might raise improper ideas in the mind.

It would be an endless task to enumerate the laws
which in every well-regulated country have the same
tendency; suffice it to say, that in all such, every
violent attempt on the virtue of women is punishable
either by death, corporal punishment, or loss of money.
It would be needless, we presume, to enumerate
to our fair readers, the various interdictions
against unchastity almost every where to be met with
in the rules of the Christian religion, interdictions
which none of them, we hope, are unacquainted
with, and to which few only do not pay a proper
regard, both from duty and inclination. When we
therefore consider that almost all laws human and
divine have so strongly inculcated this virtue, when
the ingenuity of every nation has been so strongly
exerted in preserving it, we hope we need not join
our feeble efforts in recommending it to our country-
men in particular, and to the sex in general, as the
greatest ornament of their character.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the various opinions entertained by different Nations concerning Women.

IN every age and country, have started up men distinguished by the singularity, and not unfrequently by the absurdity, of their opinions. The present times have given birth to some philosophers, who have degraded human nature to the lowest pitch of insipidity, and placed it below the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. According to them, man was at first endowed with nothing but an imitative faculty, and was obliged to employ it in learning articulate sounds, and afterwards music from the birds, industry from the ants and bees, architecture from the beaver, and almost all the other arts from some of the animals which he saw at work around him. By which scheme they have dropt a man at first from the hands of his Creator, by far the most unfinished of all his works; and have gradually traced his advancement to the exalted rank which he at present holds in the scale of beings, through a long series of exertions and improvements of his own.—What an extraordinary animal has their fancy thus formed? while the condition of all the other animals is so stationary, that they remain at this day nearly the same as at the creation, they have given to man a power of forming his own intellectual powers, and of fabricating his own fortunes.

When such are the general ideas that some have entertained of our species, and when such, as we sometimes see it, is the pride and arrogance of male

nature, we need not wonder at the mean and despicable opinions we shall find in the prosecution of this subject, entertained of a sex, whom satirical wittlings and morose philosophers have employed every talent to vilify and abuse.

The human genus has, with no small degree of probability, been divided by naturalists into several distinct species, each marked with corporal differences, which could hardly arise from custom or from climate, and with intellectual powers scarcely less indicative of this division than the marks of their bodies. These species, like those of most other animals are again divided into sexes, with different sentiments and faculties, adapted to the different purposes for which they were intended. So far the distinctions are plain; but although we find in general through the whole of animated nature the males of every species endowed with a degree of bodily strength, superior to the females, yet we have no plain indication of any superiority conferred upon these males in the powers, faculties, and instincts with which their minds are furnished. Among the brute animals we do not recollect that any one has been hardy enough to contend for this male superiority; among human beings, however, it has been, and is still so strongly contended for, that we shall give a short view of this contention, as the history of one of the most material peculiarities of opinion that has been entertained concerning the sex.

Whether this supposed superiority is, in civil life, owing to any arrogance inherent in male nature, or to the pride of more numerous acquisitions, we shall not at present examine; in savage life we may account for it upon another principle. We have already seen, that among the rudest savages, and in

the earlier ages of antiquity, when the bulk of mankind were only a few degrees removed from that state, that bodily strength was the only thing held in particular estimation; and women having rather a less portion of this than men, were on that account never so much esteemed, nor rated at so high a value from the body it was easy to make a transition to the mind, and suppose its powers less extensible, because for want of opportunities they were less extended, hence an inferiority, which arose only from circumstances, was supposed to have arisen from nature, and the sex were accordingly treated as beings of an inferior order. But in savage life the difference of bodily strength between the two sexes is less visible than in civil life. Captain Wallis informs us that Obereah, queen of Otaheite, lifted him over a marsh, when she gallanted him to her house, with as much ease as he could have done a little girl; and it is probable that there is still less difference in the faculties of the mind, and if there is any, it arises not so much from nature as from want of exertion.

Whether the idea of female inferiority arose solely from the causes we have now mentioned is not altogether certain, but from whatever source it arose, we have the most undoubted proofs of its being so widely disseminated, that except among the Egyptians, and a few other nations which borrowed their customs and culture from Egypt, it was from the most remote antiquity firmly established among every people; for women were almost by all the ancients bought and sold, by some of them borrowed, lent, or given away at pleasure, and constantly treated as the private property of the men; circumstances which could not have happened had not the ideas entertained of them given rise to such indignant treatment.

This indignant treatment of the females of our own species is a singularity of behaviour peculiar to man and has not originated from any thing he could observe around him; for the males of the brute animals do not, so far as we can discover, ever pretend to govern, direct, or dispose of their females; nor, unless in the strength of their bodies, can we discern that they are any way superior to them. The female of those animals that hunt for prey, are as sagacious in discovering and catching it as the males. The mare and the grey-hound bitch are as swift as the horse or the dog, of their species. The females of the feathered kind seem to be universally more intelligent than the males, particularly in rearing and taking care of their young. Hence it appears, that we cannot have learned from analogy to consider women as so much our inferiors; and if we examine our claim of superiority with impartiality, we shall perhaps find, that unless with respect to the corporeal powers it is but ill-founded. But partiality and self-love in this examination generally give a bias to our judgments, and a fondness for the pursuits and studies in which we are engaged makes us under-value all such as are directed to different ends and purposes, though in themselves not less useful: thus men set the greatest value upon the martial abilities which distinguish them in the field, or upon the literary ones which make them conspicuous as statesmen and orators, while they hardly ever consider the excellence of female sprightliness and vivacity, qualities which diffuse gaiety and cheerfulness around them; nor those pains which the sex patiently suffer, and powers they exert, in raising up a generation to succeed us when we shall be no more. Are these less useful than the desolating arts of war, or even than the speculations of the statesman and improvements of

the philosopher ; or are the women less distinguished in them than the men are in the other ?

But let us take a still clearer view of the matter, and we shall find that this boasted pre-eminence of the men is at least as much the work of art as of nature, and that women in those savage states, where both sexes are alike unadorned by culture, are, perhaps, not at all inferior in mind to the other sex, and even scarcely inferior to them in strength of body. This subject is, however, of the most difficult nature ; to investigate with precision the powers and propensities of women, it is necessary to be a woman ; to investigate those of men, it is necessary to be a man ; to compare them impartially, to be something different from either.

In order, however, to obtain the most clear and comprehensive view of the corporeal and mental difference of the two sexes that our faculties will admit of, we shall begin by considering them in those states where they approach the nearest to nature. In such states, the difference is much less than in civil society, where, nourished by art, and formed by culture, both sexes assume appearances which are entirely the offspring of that culture ; and especially the men, upon whom a far greater share of it is bestowed.— And in such states we find the female endowed with the same patient endurance of hunger, thirst, cold, and fatigue, as the male ; inured from their infancy to toil, hardship, and an inclement sky, their bodies acquire nearly the same hard and robust appearance, and they are capable of efforts nearly as great as the men ; nor are the faculties of their minds visibly different. Hunting and fishing are the chief employment of the men, and in these arts, when we consider the materials they have to work with, we cannot

help owning that they shew no despicable share of ingenuity ; proofs of which are every where to be met with among them ; such proofs, are the fishing-nets that our late discoverers found they employed in the South Sea, which were much larger and better contrived than any other hitherto made in Europe. Such are fish-hooks which they make of shells and other materials, which in the hand of an European artist, would be useless ; and such are the various methods of decoying and snaring wild beasts. Proofs of their genius may likewise be drawn from the manner in which they discover on the ground the tracks of these wild beasts, or of their enemies whom they are pursuing ; from their sagacity in finding their way across long and pathless deserts, covered with wood, and from a variety of other circumstances : but this ingenuity extends itself only to the narrow circle of hunting, fishing, and war, beyond which their ideas have hardly ever reached ; in many places not even so far as to shelter themselves from the weather by cloaths and by houses, or to save any of the provisions of a present hour, for a time of future scarcity.

Such are men in savage life. In considering women, we shall see, that in the province to which they are confined, they at least equal their men in art and ingenuity. In some countries they have carried the art of dyeing certain colours to no inconsiderable degree of perfection ; in others, that of making trinkets and ornaments of such materials as in Europe we could not turn to any possible use ; and their method of bringing up children is almost every where more agreeable to nature, and consequently preferable to that of the more polished nations ; but here their progress is at an end ; and like the men, their little span of knowledge and inven-

tion is confined within a narrow circle, which from the beginning of time, like the sea, has had its 'hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther.'

On comparing the aggregate of the corporeal and intellectual powers of the two sexes in savage life, the difference will appear much less than it generally does on a superficial view. Though in the hunting, fishing, and warlike excursions of the men, there appears a considerable share of art and ingenuity; yet these arts have among them been time immemorial in a stationary condition, and time immemorial have also been taught by fathers to their sons, without the sons ever having deviated from the road chalked out by their fathers, or thinking of adding any improvements to what they perhaps considered as already perfect. Though, in the dyeing and making of trinkets as practised by the women, there is also an appearance of art, we have not the least doubt, that they are rather customary operations, which they have for many ages performed without the smallest improvement or variation, this we the more readily believe, when we consider, that in many places the domestic employments and œconomy of savages, is nearly the same as in the patriarchal ages.

When, from savage life, we proceed to consider the share that each sex has had in the progress of those improvements, which lead to civilization, it appears, that each, in its proper sphere, has contributed nearly, in an equal proportion, to this great and valuable purpose. The art of spinning, one of the most useful that ever was invented, is, by all antiquity, ascribed to women: the Egyptians give the honour of it to Isis; the Chinese, to the consort of their emperor Yao. This, and the art

of sewing, an art hardly less necessary, the fables and traditions of almost all nations ascribe to the fair sex. The Lydians ascribed them to Arachne; the Greeks to Minerva; the antient Peruvians to Mama-Oella, wife to Manco-capac, their first sovereign; and the Romans gave the invention, not only of spinning and sewing, but also of weaving, to their women. Such, and perhaps many many others of a similar nature, were the contributions of female genius towards the utility and convenience of life; contributions which at least equal, if not rival, whatever has been done by the boasted ingenuity of man.

When we survey the vast continent of Africa and America, where almost every thing but fishing and hunting devolves on the women, we there find pasturage and agriculture, with the other arts which contribute to the convenience of life, in the same rude state in which they were in the days of Homer; the arts and sciences hardly known, letters totally disregarded, and domestic œconomy extremely rude and imperfect; and such, in general, is the conditions of all countries, where almost every thing is left to the management of their women. But even this is no absolute sign of their inferiority, or want of genius; they are here taken out of that sphere, which nature marked out for them, and introduced into another, to which she neither adapted their talents nor abilities; and we may with equal reason blame the men for not improving the arts of spinning and of nursing; as the women for not improving agriculture and the other arts, to which male talents and abilities only are adapted.

When from these countries we turn towards Europe, where almost every thing is managed and directed by the men, a different scene presents itself:

there we not only find a great variety of improvements already far advanced, but also a laudable spirit of emulation, and a thirst after new discoveries, universally prevailing; and frequently producing fresh acquisitions to the stock of knowledge, and to the conveniences of life. These, at first view, seem plain indications, that the genius of men in leading the human species from an uncultivated to a cultivated state, is superior to that of women; but, on more deliberate consideration, they prove no more than that each sex has its particular qualities, and is fitted by the Author of nature for accomplishing different purposes.

What we have now advanced, points out to us the reason, why women have seldom or never contributed to the improvement of the abstract sciences: but there is still another reason; the sex are almost every where neglected in their education, and in some degree slaves; and it is well known, that slavery throws a damp on the genius, clouds the spirits, and takes more than half the worth away from every human being. The history of every period, and of every people, presents us with some extraordinary women, who have soared above all these disadvantages, and shone in all the different characters, which render men eminent and conspicuous. Syria furnishes us with a Semiramis, Africa with a Zenobia; both famous for their heroism and skill in government. Greece and Rome, with many who set public examples of courage and fortitude; Germany and England have exhibited queens, whose talents in the field, and in the cabinet, would have done honour to any sex; but it was reserved for Russia, in the person of the present Empress, to join both talents, and to add to them, what is still more noble, an inclination to favour the sciences, and restore

the natural rights of mankind ; rights which almost every other sovereign has endeavoured to destroy. Upon the whole, we may conclude, that though in the progress of mankind from ignorance to knowledge, women have, for the reasons already assigned, seldom taken the lead. Yet they have not been backward to follow the path to utility or improvement, when pointed out to them.

We have just now seen, that, in savage life, the sexual difference, as far as it regards strength and activity of body, is not very considerable ; as society advances, this difference becomes more perceptible ; and in countries the most polished, is so conspicuous as to appear even to the slightest observer. In such countries, the women are, in general, weak and delicate ; but these qualities are only the result of art, otherwise they would uniformly mark the sex, however circumstanced ; but as this is not the case, we may attribute them to a sedentary life, a low abstemious diet, and exclusion from the fresh air ; but these causes do not stop here ; their influence reaches farther, and is productive of that laxity of the female fibres, and sensibility of nerves, which while it gives birth to half their foibles, is the source also of many of the finer feelings, for which we value and admire them ; and of which bodies of a firmer texture, and of stronger nerves, are entirely destitute. However paradoxical this may appear to those who have not attended to the subject, we scruple not to affirm, that such is the effect of want of exercise, confined air, and low diet, that they will soon reduce, not only the robust body, but the most resolute mind, to a set of weaknesses and feelings similar to these of the most delicate and timorous female.— This being granted, we lay it down as a general rule, that to the difference of education, and the

different manner of living which the sexes have adopted, is owing a great part of their corporeal difference, as well as the difference of their intellectual faculties and feelings; and we persuade ourselves that nature, in forming the bodies and minds of both sexes, has been nearly alike liberal to each; and that any apparent difference in the exertions of the strength of the one, or the reasonings of the other, are much more the work of art than of nature.

We know it is a generally established opinion, that in strength of mind, as well as of body, men are greatly superior to women; an opinion into which we have been led, by not duly considering the proper propensities and paths chalked out to each by the Author of their nature, and the powers given them to follow these paths and propensities. Men are endowed with boldness and courage, and women are not; the reason is plain, these are beauties in our character, in theirs they would be defects. Our genius often leads us to the great and the arduous; theirs to the soft and the pleasing: we bend our thoughts to make life convenient; they turn theirs to make it easy and agreeable. Would it be difficult for women to acquire the endowments allotted to us by nature? It would be as much so for us to acquire those peculiarly allotted to them. Are we superior to them in what belongs to the male character? they are no less so to us in what belongs to the female. But whether are male or female endowments most useful in life? This we shall not pretend to determine; and till it be determined, we cannot decide the claim which men or women have to superior excellence. But to pursue this idea a little further; Would it not be highly ridiculous to find fault with the snail, because she cannot run as fast as the hare,

or with the lamb, because he is not so bold as the lion? Would it not be requiring from each an exertion of powers that nature had not given, and deciding of their excellence, by comparing them to a wrong standard? would it not appear rather ludicrous to say, that a man was endowed only with inferior abilities, because he was not expert in the nursing of children, and practising the various effeminacies, which we reckon lovely in a woman? Would it be reasonable to condemn him on these accounts? Just as reasonable is it, to reckon women inferior to men, because their talents are in general not adapted to tread the horrid path of war, nor to trace the mazes and intricacies of science. Horace, who is by all allowed to have been an adept in the knowledge of mankind, says, “In vain do we endeavour to expel what nature has planted.” And we may add, In vain do we endeavour to cultivate what she has not planted. Equally absurd is it to compare women to men, and to pronounce them inferior, because they have not the same qualities, and in the same perfection.

We shall finish this subject, by observing, that if women are inferior to men, they are the most so in nations highly polished and refined; there, in point of bodily strength, for the reasons already assigned, they are certainly inferior; and such is the influence of body upon mind, that to this laxity of body we may fairly trace many, if not all the weaknesses of mind, which we are apt to reckon blemishes in the female character. Those who have been constantly blessed with a robust constitution, and a mind not delicately susceptible, may laugh at this assertion as ridiculous; but to those, in whom accidental weakness of body has given birth to nervous feelings, with which they

were never before acquainted, it will appear in another light. But there is a further reason for the greater difference between the sexes in civil, than in savage life, which is the difference of education; while the intellectual powers of the males are gradually opened and expanded by culture, in a variety of forms: those of females are commonly either left to nature, or, which is worse, warped and biased by frippery and folly, under the name of education.

This idea of the inferiority of female nature, has drawn after it several others the most humiliating to the sex, as well as absurd and unreasonable. Such is the pride of man, that wherever the doctrine of immortality has obtained footing, he has confined that immortality entirely to his own genus, and considered it as a prerogative much too exalted for any other beings. And in some countries, not stopping here, he has also considered it as a distinction too glorious to be expected by women, whom he looks upon in too low and diminutive a light to deserve it. And thus degrading the fair partners of his nature, he places them on a level with the beasts that perish. When, or where this opinion first began, is uncertain: it could not, however, be of very ancient date; as the belief of immortality never obtained much footing till it was revealed by the Gospel. As the Asiatics have time immemorial regarded women only as instruments of animal pleasure, and in every other respect treated them as beings beneath their notice, it probably originated among them, which we the more firmly believe, when we consider, that the Mahometans, both in Asia and in Europe, are said, by a great variety of writers, to entertain this opinion. Lady Montague, in her letters, has opposed this general assertion of the writers concerning the Mahometans, and says, that they do not absolutely

deny the existence of female souls, but only hold them to be of a nature inferior to those of men, and that they enter not into the same, but into an inferior paradise prepared for them on purpose. We pretend not to decide the dispute between Lady Montague and the other writers, whom she has contradicted, but think it possible that both may be right; as the former might be the opinion of Turks brought with them from Asia; the latter, as a refinement upon it, they may have adopted by their intercourse with the Europeans. Or it may be the effect of the dawning of human reason, which at present seems to be expanding itself with greater vigour than it has done for many centuries past.

This opinion, that women were a sort of mechanical beings, only created for the pleasures of the men, whatever votaries it may have had in the East, has had but few in Europe; a few, however, have even here maintained it, and assigned various and sometimes laughable reasons for so doing: among these, a story we have heard of a Scots clergyman is not the least particular. This peaceable son of Levi, whose wife was, it seems, a descendant of the famous Xantippe,* in going through a course of lectures on the Revelations of St. John, first took up the opinion, that the sex had no souls, and were incapable of future rewards and punishments. It was no sooner known in the country that he maintained such a doctrine, than he was summoned before a presbytery of his brethren, to be dealt with according to his delinquency. When he appeared at their bar they asked him, If he really held so he

* Xantippe was the wife of Socrates, and the most famous scold of antiquity.

retical an opinion? He told them plainly, that he did. On desiring to be informed of his reasons for so doing, ‘In the Revelations of St. John the Divine,’ said he, ‘you will find this passage; ‘And there was silence in heaven for about the space of half an hour: And I appeal to all of you, to tell me, whether that could possibly have happened had there been any women there? And since there are none there, charity forbids us to imagine that they are all in a worse place; therefore it follows, that they have no immortal part; and happy is it for them, as they are thereby exempted from being accountable for all the noise and disturbance they have raised in this world.’

Some tribes of the Asiatic Tartars are of the same opinion with this reverend gentleman. ‘Women,’ say they, ‘were sent into the world only to be our servants, and propagate the species, the only purposes to which their natures are adapted;’ on this account their women are no sooner past child-bearing, than believing that they have accomplished the design of their creation, the men no farther cohabit with, or regard them. The ancient Chinese carried this idea still farther; women, according to some of them, were the most wicked and malevolent of all the beings which had been created; and a few of their ancient philosophers advised, that on this account they ought always to be put to death as soon as past child-bearing, as they could then be of no farther use, and only contributed to the disturbance of society. Ideas of a similar nature seem to have been at this time generally diffused over the East; for we find Solomon, almost every where in his writings, exclaiming against the wickedness of women; and in the Apocrypha, the author of the Ecclesiasticus, is still more illiberal in his reflections: ‘From gar-

‘ments,’ says he, ‘cometh a moth, and from wo-
‘men wickedness.’ Both these authors, it is true,
join in the most enraptured manner to praise a virtu-
ous woman, but take care at the same time to let us
know, that she is so great a rarity as to be very fel-
dom met with.

Nor have the Asiatics alone been addicted to this
illiberality of thinking concerning the sex. Satirists
of all ages and countries, while they flattered them
to their faces, have from their closets most profusely
scattered their spleen and ill-nature against them.
Of this the Greek and Roman poets afford a variety
of instances; but they must nevertheless yield the
palm to our doughty moderns. In the following
lines, Pope has outdone every one of them.

“Men some to pleasure, some to business take,
“But every woman is at heart a rake.”

Swift and Dr. Young have hardly been behind this
celebrated splenetic in illiberality. They perhaps
were not favourites of the fair, and in revenge
vented all their envy and spleen against them. But
a more modern and accomplished writer, who, by
his rank in life, by his natural and acquired graces
was undoubtedly a favourite, has repaid their kind-
ness by taking every opportunity of exhibiting them
in the most contemptible light. ‘Almost every
‘man,’ says he, ‘may be gained some way; almost
‘every woman any way.’ Can any thing exhibit a
stronger caution to the women! It is fraught with
information, and we hope they will use it accord-
ingly.

CHAPTER XIX.

The same Subject continued.

BESIDES the opinions which have been entertained of women, in consequence of their supposed inferiority, there is one scarcely less ancient or less universal, which has originated from a very different source; and which supposes the sex always to have been peculiarly addicted to hold a communication with invisible beings, who endowed them with powers superior to human nature; the exercise of which has been distinguished by the name of witchcraft.

That a notion of this kind prevailed in an early period of the world, we learn from the story of Saul the first king of Israel, who went to consult the witch of Endor concerning his own fate, and the fate of the war in which he was engaged; and from that time downward, both sacred and prophane history make it plainly appear, that this belief of witches, or dealers with familiar spirits, as they are called, was almost universally diffeminated over the whole world; insomuch that we are hardly acquainted with the history of any people, either ancient or modern, among whom it has not gained some degree of credit. Even the inhabitants of the sequestered islands in the South Sea, who have not, perhaps, from the beginning of time, had any communication with the rest of mankind, have imbibed the general opinion; for we are told, that the making of their mahie, or common beverage, is gene-

rally the work of old women, who observe several superstitious ceremonies, which they reckon absolutely necessary to the success of their operation, and guard against several things which they suppose would as absolutely spoil it; among which none can be more fatal than the touch of any person not actually concerned in the work.

In our times this superstitious idea of witchcraft is the most prevalent among nations the most ignorant and uncultivated. In some periods, at least, of antiquity, it appears to have been the reverse; for the Greeks, even in their most flourishing and enlightened periods, were almost in every circumstance the dupes of it; and the Romans following their example were, perhaps, still more so. Nothing either sportive or serious, trifling or consequential, was undertaken in Greece or Rome, without the performance of some superstitious ceremonies, reckoned absolutely necessary to insure its success.

All the ancient inhabitants of the North paid the greatest regard both to the persons and dictates of such women as were reckoned witches, and their opinion of the existence of such beings was transmitted down to their posterity, who, after the conquest of the Roman empire, had now peopled all Europe; but the doctrines of christianity, which many of these began by degrees to embrace, changed their former veneration for witches into the utmost hatred and detestation; and instead of the honours that were formerly heaped upon them, such unhappy beings as were now suspected of that crime, became subject to the most horrid barbarities that a blinded legislature and a furiously enthusiastic populace could inflict.

Though this suspicion of having intercourse with invisible beings has in most ages and countries fallen chiefly, it has not fallen altogether, on the women. The Egyptians had their magicians, the Babylonians their soothsayers, and the Persians their magi, who were all of the masculine gender; among almost all other nations the females have been for the most part consulted as witches, or dealers in the secrets of futurity. How the original idea of witches was at first suggested to mankind, is not easily accounted for; it is still more difficult to assign a reason, why this idea was in all ages so intimately connected with women, and particularly with old women. The witch of Endor is introduced as an old woman, and in every subsequent period historians, painters, and poets, have all exhibited their witches as old women; nor can we without pain relate, that a majority of those unhappy creatures condemned a few centuries ago in all the criminal courts of Europe, were old women. Might we hazard a conjecture on this subject, we would suppose that in the earlier ages of the world, while women were only kept as instruments of animal pleasure, and only valued while they had youth and beauty, as soon as these were over, they were deserted by society and left to languish in solitude; a situation which is of all others that in which the human mind is most susceptible of wisdom, which wisdom soon making them more conspicuous than the ignorant crowd from which they had been exiled, might give birth to a notion, that they were assisted by invisible agents.

This may in some measure explain to us the origin of the idea of witches, so far as it relates to old women, but leaves the origin of the general idea still involved in the same obscurity. We flatter ourselves, however, that some light may be thrown

even on the general idea by the following observations : we are told in scripture, that in the earlier periods of the world, a communication between celestial and human beings, was not uncommon.—God appeared to our first parents in the garden of Eden ; the angels came to Lot, to warn him of the destruction of Sodom ; to Abraham, to intimate to him the birth of a son in his old age ; and Moses is said to have seen God face to face, when he received from him the tables upon the mount. Nor was this opinion peculiar to the Israelites, the gods of the other nations were said almost constantly to live with them, to appear in a familiar manner and communicate their orders to them, and even to beget children with their women. Bacchus taught mankind the use of the grape, and Ceres, a female divinity, instructed them in the use of corn ; even Jupiter, their supreme deity, frequently came down to the earth, and cohabited with their women ; when such were the ideas generally diffeminated, that good beings of all denominations frequently appeared to, and communicated some of their knowledge and their power to mortals, it was but carrying them one step farther, and supposing that evil beings, likewise, did the same thing for the purposes of mischief ; and hence those who were supposed to communicate with good beings probably were called prophets, and those who communicated with evil ones, witches, wizzards, &c. ; nor does this seem altogether conjecture, for mention is made in the sacred writings of evil spirits, who had their false prophets, to whom they dictated lies, in order to lead to destruction those who listened to them.

Such possibly might be the origin of witchcraft ; and such the reasons why old women were most commonly suspected of it. But it still remains to be

considered why the sex in general were thought to have been more addicted to it than the men; the reasons of this also may, perhaps, be discovered in the different habitudes and ways of life of the two sexes. From the remotest antiquity the men inured to hunting, fishing, and pasturage, were constantly abroad in the open air; they were consequently healthful and robust, and not subject to these nervous weaknesses and spasmodic fits which so strongly characterise modern ages, and have often been supposed the effect of witchcraft. The women on the contrary, of a more delicate frame, more confined by their domestic and sedentary employments, and the jealousy of their husbands and relations, and perhaps, even more simple than the men in their diet, would be much more subject to nervous weaknesses, and all the uncommon appearances that sometimes attend them; in the paroxysms of these nervous disorders, they would frequently utter the most strange and incoherent language, and as the ancient manner of conveying instruction and predicting future events was commonly in this unconnected allegorical strain, accompanied with extraordinary gestures and contortions of the body, such rhapsodical effusions, the mere effect of nervous irritability, might be easily mistaken for the inspiration either of good or evil beings, and therefore women, being more subject to such fits than men, might be more commonly denominated prophetesses, or witches, according to the nature of the spirit with which it was supposed they were agitated.

That this appears at least no improbable account of the matter, we have reason to believe, from the ancient manner of initiating men into the mysteries of prophecying, and women into the trade of delivering, oracles. Men were of old initiated into the

number of prophets by long and severe watchings, fastings, and by every species of mortification. The Bramins of the East, at this day admit none to their religious mysteries, till they have prepared themselves by many years of discipline, abstinence, and mortification ; and even the Angekots, or priests of Greenland, when they pretend to go to visit the land of souls for the purpose of revealing what they are doing or suffering, prepare themselves by fasting for their journey, and set out on it by dancing and howling themselves into a temportry frenzy. It were easy to give more instances, but we rather proceed to the effects of such a conduct on the body and mind ; effects which every one who has been reduced to weakness by similar causes, will more readily conceive from his own feelings than from any description ; we shall, therefore, only observe in general, that they are those diseases of the vapourish kind, which are constantly accompanied with a train of the most indigested and tumultu ary ideas. Women were likewise initiated into the mystery of delivering oracles, by methods similar to those we have now related, and when they actually delivered them, were wrought up into a state of convulsive enthusiasm ; the Pythones, who gave the answers of the Delphian oracle, the most famous of all antiquity, washed herself and ate some laurel leaves, a plant well known for its intoxicating powers, before she ascended the tripod. Thus prepared and seated, a prodigious noise was made in the hollow body of the tripod beneath her, which added to the effect of the laurel, and an empty stomach, soon threw her into convulsions and a temporary madness ; when, from the ambiguous rhapsodies that she uttered, the deluded consultors were obliged either to deduct some meaning, or depart in the same ignorance in which they came.

As the sacred writings so frequently mention witches, wizzards, and dealers with familiar spirits, we might from thence imagine that such ideas existed among the Jews only; were not the other writings of antiquity every where as full of them, a circumstance we cannot wonder at, when we consider that such ideas were much more favoured by the polytheism of the Gentiles, than by the belief of one Supreme Almighty Being, as taught among the Jews. Among the Gentiles also as well as among the Jews, it is probable there were female enchantresses, though we do not recollect to have met with any account of them till we come to the Greeks, who exhibit them every where in their fables and mythology, as beings possessed of the most astonishing and supernatural powers. Medea is said to have taught Jason to tame the brazen-footed bulls, and the dragons which guarded the golden fleece. Hecate, and several others are said to have been so skilful in spells and incantations, that among their other feats, they could turn the most obdurate hearts to love, as we shall have occasion to mention afterward in our history of courtship. Circe, we are told, detained even the sage Ulysses in her enchanted island, and transformed his sailors into swine. Besides these, there were many others who, like the witches of our modern times, could bring on diseases, raise tempests in the air, and ride on the clouds from one country to another. Nor were the Romans less the dupes of this pretended art than the Greeks; the whole of their historians and poets are full of the follies and absurdities to which it reduced them; Horace frequently mentions a Canidia, who was reckoned a most powerful enchantress; and Virgil makes one of his shepherds declare, that such was the power of charms, that they could draw down the moon from the sky. But the Romans were not the only people

of antiquity who carried their ideas thus far; the Babylonians boasted that all the contingencies of fate were in their hands, and that they were able to avert every evil, and procure every good by their magical ceremonies. And doctrines of a nature not much dissimilar appear to have been spread over other countries in the East; for about Calcutta they formerly consulted forcerers concerning the destiny of their children, and if the prediction promised happiness they were spared to live, but if the contrary, they were put to death as soon as born. The Japanese at this day pay the most unlimited credit to forceries, incantations, lucky and unlucky days, and publish every year the almanac, pointing them out to the public, lest upon the unlucky ones they should transact any business, which they imagine in that case could not possibly prosper.

Almost every ignorant people are the dupes of superstition, which in nothing displays itself more than in fruitless attempts to become acquainted with the secrets of futurity; hence the Greeks and Romans, and perhaps all antiquity, from the number of oracles every where resorted to, were much given to divination; but the northern nations still much exceeded all others, and carried this spirit to the most unaccountable lengths. The Scandinavians, Germans, Gauls, Britons, &c. were of all people perhaps the most ignorant, and of all, the greatest slaves to superstition; their druids and druidesses exercised an authority over them which even the most absolute monarch of the present times would not dare to attempt, but not to those only did they yield an implicit obedience, they obeyed, esteemed, and even venerated every female who pretended to deal in charms and incantations, and the dictates of such, as they were supposed to come from the invisible pow-

ers, were more regarded than the laws of nature, of humanity, or of their country. The life of their warriors was such as secured them a firmness of nerves, and freedom from nervous hypochondriac disorders; their women being more subject to them by nature, and by their manner of life, were, in all their fits, considered as inspired by some divinity, and regarded accordingly.—Women in the North have almost solely appropriated to themselves the trade of divination, men have had the largest share of it in the South; the reason is, men in the South are by the climate and their low diet of rice and fruit, subject to all the diseases of women, and women are precluded from all communication with the public.

Among the ancient inhabitants of the North, nothing was held in so much estimation as poetry and divination. A troop of poets, called Bards, commonly attended on the great; not to grace their train but in the effusions of frantic doggerel, to celebrate exploits, and praise their victories. Besides these, there was generally in the train of the rich and powerful some venerable prophetesses, who directed their councils, and to whom they paid a deference and respect, at present almost incredible; as will appear from the story of Thorbiorga, a Danish enchantress, reckoned famous for her knowledge of futurity. The kingdom of Denmark, being much distressed by a famine, ‘ Earl Thorchil, who had the
‘ greatest authority in that country, and was most
‘ desirous to know when the famine and sickness,
‘ which then raged, would come to an end, sent
‘ messengers to invite Thorbiorga to his house.—
‘ After he had made all the preparations which were
‘ usual for the reception of such an honourable guest,
‘ in particular, a seat was prepared for the prophet-

‘ es, raised some steps above the other seats, and
‘ covered with a cushion, stuffed with hen-feathers :
‘ when she arrived, on an evening, she was dressed
‘ in a gown of green cloth, buttoned from top to
‘ bottom, had a string of glass beads about her
‘ neck, and her head covered with the skin of a
‘ black lamb, lined with the skin of a white cat ;
‘ her shoes were made of calf-skin, with the hair on
‘ it, tied with thongs, and fastened with brass but-
‘ tons ; on her hands she had a pair of gloves of a
‘ white cat-skin, with the fur inward ; about her
‘ waist, she wore an Hunlandic girdle, at which hung
‘ a bag containing her magical instruments ; and she
‘ supported her feeble limbs, by leaning on a staff,
‘ adorned with many knobs of brass. As soon as
‘ she entered the hall, the whole company rose, as
‘ it became them, and saluted her in the most re-
‘ spectful manner, which she returned as she thought
‘ proper. Earl Thorchil then advanced, and taking
‘ her by the hand, conducted her to a seat prepared
‘ for her ; after some time spent in conversation, a
‘ table was set before her covered with many dishes ;
‘ but she ate only a pottage of goat’s milk, and of a
‘ dish which consisted of the hearts of various ani-
‘ mals. When the table was removed, Thorchil
‘ humbly approached the prophetess, and asked her,
‘ What she thought of his house, and of his family ?
‘ And when she would be pleased to tell him what
‘ they desired to know ? To this she replied, That
‘ she would tell them nothing that evening, but
‘ would satisfy them fully next day. Accordingly
‘ the day after, when she had put all her imple-
‘ ments of divination in proper order, she command-
‘ ed a maiden, named Godreda, to sing the magical
‘ song called Wardlokur ; which she did with so
‘ clear and sweet a voice, that the whole company
‘ were ravished with her music, and none so much

‘ as the Prophetess ; who cried out, Now I know
‘ many things concerning this famine and sickness,
‘ which I did not know before. This famine will
‘ be of short continuance, and plenty will return
‘ next season ; which will be favourable, and the
‘ sickness also will very shortly fly away. After
‘ this the whole company approached the goddess,
‘ one by one, and asked her what questions they
‘ pleased, and she told them every thing they desired
‘ to know.’ A variety of instances of this kind might
be adduced, to shew the veneration in which dealers
in futurity were held amongst the ancient north-
erns. We shall only mention another : ‘ There
‘ was a certain old woman, named Heida, famous
‘ for her skill in divination, and the art of magic ;
‘ who frequented public entertainments, predicted
‘ what sort of weather would be the year after, and
‘ told men and women their fortunes ; she was con-
‘ stantly attended by thirty men-servants, and wait-
‘ ed upon by fifteen maidens.’ Such was the veneration
of our ancestors for beings, whom their descend-
ants, in a few centuries afterwards, began to ex-
crate, to condemn to the flames, to whips, to tor-
tures, horse-ponds, and every other species of cruel
indignity. Upon a change so important in sentiment
and behaviour, the following considerations will, we
hope, throw some light.

Every system of theology, from the beginning of
time, had been filled with the doctrine of a commu-
nication between celestial and terrestrial beings.--
The Jewish religion was remarkably full of it : the
Jews, therefore, greatly venerated such human be-
ings as they thought were thus dignified with the
correspondence of spiritual essences. The polythe-
ism of the Gentiles, their different ranks and degrees
of gods, and the few degrees of distinction between

their gods and their heroes, made it no great wonder, that this communication among them was still supposed to be more common. Among the Jews it would seem, that some small degree of inferiority was affixed to those who were supposed to draw their knowledge of future events from evil spirits; but among most of the neighbouring nations, they had hardly any such distinction as evil and good spirits; they had indeed *Dii Infernales*, or infernal gods; but they made so little difference between these infernal gods and their celestial ones, that they paid to each of them almost an equal share of worship and adoration; hence those who foretold events by a communication with the one kind, were hardly less esteemed, than those who foretold them by a communication with the other. But when the Christian religion was introduced, which taught that all future events were only known to God, or to such only of his creatures as he chose to discover them to; and that in all others, it was impious to endeavour to find out what he had concealed: such as still pretended to deal in them, instead of being accounted false imposters, as they ought to have been, were supposed to have drawn their information from evil spirits: hence the trade of predicting, which before was thought the most honourable, while its knowledge was derived from an honourable source; now, when that knowledge came from a dishonourable one, likewise became not only dishonourable, but criminal. Every one who pretended to that trade, was denominated witch or wizzard; and against all such, the obsolete Jewish law, which says, Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live, was revived; and the same profession, which we have before seen raising prophets and prophetesses to the highest veneration and dignity, now subjected them to the flames.

From the twelfth to the sixteenth century, almost all Europe was one scene of highly ridiculous opinions ; to maintain which, kings led forth their armies, piously to cut the throats of their neighbours ; and priests condemned to flames in this world, and threatened eternal fire in the world to come. Many of those opinions were, however, but local ; and many sunk into oblivion with the authors, who first broached them ; but the notion of females being addicted to witchcraft had taken deep root, and spread itself all over Europe. It had been gathering strength from the days of Moses ; and it subsisted till the enquiring spirit of philosophy, demonstrated by the plainest experiments, that many of those things which had always been supposed the effect of supernatural, were really the effect of natural causes. No sex, no rank, no age, was exempted from the suspicions of, and punishments inflicted on the perpetrators of this supposed crime ; but old women were, of all other beings, the most liable to be suspected of it. Poets had delineated, and painters had drawn all their witches as old women, with haggard and wrinkled countenances, withered hands and tottering limbs ; these, which were only characteristic symptoms of old age, had, by an unhappy assemblage of unconnected ideas, become also the characteristic symptoms of witchcraft. And hence every old woman, bowed down with age and infirmity, was commonly dubbed with the appellation of witch ; and when any event happened in her neighbourhood ; for which the ignorance of the times was not able to account, she was immediately suspected as the cause ; and in consequence committed to jail by an ignorant magistrate, and condemned by as ignorant a judge, or what, perhaps was worse than either, made the sport of a ruffian multitude, heated by enthusiasm, and led on by folly ; which

a few centuries ago ran to such a pitch of extravagance, that Livonia, and some other parts of the North, it is said, that not many women who had arrived at old age were suffered to die peaceably in their beds, but were either hurried to an untimely execution, or so much abused by a licentious populace, that death was frequently the consequence.

But the suspicions of witchcraft were neither altogether confined to age nor to poverty; the bloom of youth and beauty, and the dignity of rank could afford no safety. In France, England, and Germany, ladies of the highest quality were condemned to the stake for crimes of which it was impossible they could be guilty; but when crimes are either highly improbable or altogether impossible, the proof required to be brought against those who are supposed to have committed them, is on that account generally sustained as valid, though much less clear than in other cases. Thus it was with witchcraft, while the fixing of every other crime required some degree of rational and consistent evidence, this was fixed by idle and ridiculous tales, or, in short, by any shadow of evidence whatever. Such being the case, statesmen often availed themselves of witchcraft as a pretence to take off persons who were obnoxious to them, and against whom no other crime could be proved: this was the pretence made use of for condemning the Maid of Orleans, well known in the history of England and of France; who, by her personal courage, and the power she assumed over the minds of a superstitious people, by persuading them that Heaven was on their side, delivered her country from the most formidable invasion which had ever threatened its subversion. Such was the pretence for destroying the Dutchess de Conchini; who, being asked by her judges, What methods she

had practised to fascinate the Queen of France? boldly replied, ‘ Only by that ascendancy which ‘ great minds have over little ones.’ Nothing was too absurd in these times to gain credit; and proofs only became the more valid as they were the more ridiculous. Under Manuel Comnenus, one of the Greek emperors at Constantinople, an officer of high rank was condemned for parafising secrets that rendered men invifible. And another had like to have fhared the fame fate, becaufe he was caught reading a book of Solomon’s, the bare perufal of which, they faid, was fufficient to conjure up whole legions of devils. The Dutcheffs of Gloucefter, with Mary Gurdemain, and a prieft, were accused of having made a figure of Henry VI. in wax, and roasted it before the fire; though the action itfelf was ridiculous, and though there was no proof of it nor poffibility of the confequences which they imagined were to arife from it, they were all three found guilty; the prieft was hanged, Gurdemain was burnt in Smithfield, and the Dutcheffs condemned to penance and perpetual imprifonment. The Duke of Gloucefter, who was regent to Edward V. fhewed an emaciated arm in the council-chamber; and his really having an arm withered, was deemed a fufficient proof, not only that it was done by forcery, but that the forcerers were the wife of his brother, and Jane Shore. To what a low ebb was human reafon reduced, when from fuch premifes it could draw fuch conclufions?

Such was the condition of women in Europe for feveral centuries, constantly liable to be accused of and punished for, crimes which had no exiftence; till philofophy at laft came to refcue them from their danger, by diffipating the gloom of ignorance which had for ages enveloped the human mind; and teach-

ing men to prefer reason to opinion, however the latter might be sanctified by time, or strengthened by the celebrated names from which it had originated. But the struggle between reason and opinion was not the struggle of a day or a year, it lasted for several ages, and is not at this hour completely decided; as there are some people still to be found, who have more faith in ancient sayings and opinions, than in the fullest demonstration of which reason is capable.

What reason and philosophy had atchieved in Europe, was accomplished in America by shame and remorse. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, some of the most gloomy bigots of several nations, and particularly of England, to avoid the persecutions to which their own tenets, and the intolerant spirit of the times subjected them, had emigrated to the inhospitable deserts of America; these carried along with them into that New World, the same ideas of forcery which they had imbibed in Europe, and the same intolerant spirit from which they had fled. Though they had accounted it exceedingly hard, that in Europe they should have been persecuted for religious opinions, yet they soon imposed the same hardships upon others, from which they themselves had fled with so much horror and reluctance; and had but just begun to breath from a cruel persecution against the Quakers and Anabaptists, when a new suppositious danger alarmed their fears, and set the whole country of New England in a ferment. A minister in Salem had two daughters, one of whom falling into a hysteric disorder, attended with convulsions, the father concluded she was bewitched. An Indian maid-servant was suspected of the crime; and so often beat and otherwise cruelly treated by her wrong-headed master, that she at last confessed.

herself guilty, and was committed to prison ; from whence, after a long confinement, she was at last released to be sold for a slave.

The idea, however, was now started ; nor was it so easy a matter to lay it again to rest. Every similar complaint was supposed to proceed from a similar cause, and the affected naturally cast their eyes upon such as either were in reality, or were supposed to be their enemies ; and those they accused as the causes of the evils they suffered. Every evil that befel the human body, was in a little time asserted to be the effect of witchcraft ; and every enemy to the afflicted was accused, and every accusation certainly proved. In default of rational proof, an evidence called by them spectral, and never before heard of, was admitted ; on the validity of which, many were condemned to suffer death. The most common and innocent actions, were now construed to be magical ceremonies, and every one filled with horror, and dissident of his neighbours, was forward to accuse all around him : neither age, sex, nor character, afforded the least protection. Women were stripped in the most shameful manner to search for magical teats. Scorbatic or other stains on the skin, were called the devil's pinches ; and these pinches afforded the most undeniable evidence against those upon whom they were discovered. But if any thing was wanting in evidence, it was amply supplied by the confession extorted by tortures, of so cruel a nature, and so long continuance, that they forced the unhappy sufferers to acknowledge themselves guilty of whatever their tormentors chose to lay to their charge. Women owned various and ridiculous correspondencies with infernal spirits, and even that such had frequently cohabited with them. Nor were the wretches under torture more pressed

to discover their own guilt than that of others; when it frequently happened that, unable to give any account of real criminals, they were forced by torture to name people at random, who being immediately taken up, were treated in the same manner, and obliged, in their turn, to name others, not more guilty than themselves.

The phrenzy was now become universal, the nearest ties of blood, and the most sacred friendships, were no more regarded, the gibbets every where exhibited to the people their friends and their neighbours hanging as malefactors, the cities were filled with terror and amazement, and the prisons so crowded that executions were obliged to be made every day, in order to make room for more of the supposed criminals. Magistrates who refused to commit to jail, and juries which brought in a verdict for acquittance, were on that account suspected and accused; accusations were also at last brought against the judges themselves, and the torrent had reached even to the palace of the governor, when a general pause ensued; conscious of his dangerous situation, every man trembled on looking around him, and every man resolved to cease from prosecuting his neighbour, as the only method of procuring his own safety. Shame and remorse arose from reflection, reason resumed the rein, and the storm that had threatened a total depopulation of the country subsided at once into peace. In this paroxysm expired a spirit which for time immemorial had been a scourge to the human race, and particularly to that fair part of it whose history we are now delineating.

Another opinion nearly related to that which we have now been discussing, and scarcely, perhaps, less ancient, is the possession by devils. This

through a long succession of ages had been considered as common to both sexes, and consequently not falling properly within our plan. But as the priests of the Romish church have adopted, and still maintain it now, when it is nearly exploded by every other set of men, and as they almost entirely confine it to women, we shall give a short account of it.

So delicate is the sensibility, or rather irritability, of the female constitution, that they are thereby subjected to several diseases, whose symptoms and appearances are more extraordinary than those with which the men are commonly afflicted. Such, it is highly probable, were those diseases which in the New Testament are called the possession of devils, and from persons thus affected, when they were healed by our Saviour, devils were said to be cast out.

Every one who has had an opportunity of seeing diseases of the spasmodic kind, must have been sensible that persons so affected, frequently exerted a force which at other times they were totally incapable of. Hence, in ages of ignorance and superstition, it is no great wonder that such exertions, and such symptoms of torture as accompanied them, were attributed to the agency or possession of evil spirits. But medical philosophers, beginning to throw aside every prejudice, and attach themselves only to truth, at last discovered, that symptoms which had formerly been supposed to arise from the agency of malevolent spirits which had entered into the human body, in reality arose from natural causes; and this doctrine, as being more consonant to reason, as well as confirmed by observation, was at last pretty generally received. But as every improvement of the

human understanding is attended with inconveniency to such as fatten upon human ignorance, the priests of the Romish religion, arrogating to themselves the same powers as the author of Christianity; had always pretended to cast out devils; and finding that if there were no devils for them to cast out, their revenue and reputation would not only be diminished, but an instrument of managing the people and supporting their own power, would also be wrested out of their hands, strongly opposed this new doctrine as impious and discordant to the scripture; and to carry on the farce with the greater probability, they carefully sought out such women as were endowed with a cunning, superior to the rest of their sex, and bribed them to declare themselves possessed, that they might have the credit of dispossessing them, and thereby shewing to the world, that it had been misled by a belief of natural causes, and that they had actually derived from their great master, a power over the legions of darkness. That their scheme might be the more complete, they laboured to instil a notion into mankind, that as evil spirits were no doubt so intelligent as to understand every language, those possessed by them were also endowed with the same gift. Women, therefore, who feigned this possession, were, by the priests appointed to exorcise them, taught by rote, answers to such questions in several languages, as they should ask them. The multitude, when they thus observed women whom they knew to be without education speaking a variety of languages, were convinced that it was really the devil who spoke out of them.

Though the populace were deluded by this trick, yet the sensible part of mankind still silently despised the authors of such an imposition on human credulity; but as in Catholic countries nothing is more dange-

rous than contradicting or finding fault with the church, it was long before any one had the hardiness openly to attack this palpable absurdity; such an attack was, however, at last successfully made by a physician in Sardinia. "A young girl in Turin being troubled with hysteric fits, which threw her body into such postures and agitations as seemed supernatural, the Jesuits, who are always attentive to every thing that has a tendency to promote themselves, or turn to their advantage, soon flocked about her, attended by a physician in their interest, who alleged that she was actually possessed, and consequently not to be cured by medicine. Accordingly the exorcists were assembled, and the girl previously instructed for the better carrying on the imposture; the affair made a great noise, people came from all parts, and the old tales of witchcraft and sorceries were revived. Dr. R. nobly opposed these proceedings, and declared the girl's case was entirely owing to natural causes, supporting his opinion by reasons and instances which he had heard of in Holland and England, where he had resided many years. The Jesuits furiously attacked him as an infidel, whom they would infallibly confute from the testimony of his own senses. The Doctor consented to attend them, and while they were performing their prayers and exorcisms appeared devout; when they had finished, he desired the two ecclesiastics who were entrusted with the management of the affair, that they would order their patient to answer him a few questions, which they granted, on condition he asked nothing unlawful, and commanded the devil to answer. Accordingly the Doctor said to her in English, What is my name? This being a language to which both the girl and the Jesuits were strangers she answered in plain Piedmontese, that she did not understand the question; but according to the recei-

ved opinion, as well as the ritual, the knowledge of all languages, the supernatural strength of body, and foretelling things to come, are the proper criteria of a real satanical possession, the devil therefore ought to understand all languages, and it is easily conjectured that this ignorance did not a little mortify the Jesuits; they, however, did all in their power to elude the consequence, by pretending that the Doctor had put an unlawful question to the evil spirit, and they had forbid him to answer any of that kind; but he soon confuted their allegations by explaining the question he had asked, and immediately repeated it in Piedmontese; but the possessed, to whom he was unknown, could say as little to this as before, when the same question was proposed in English. The Doctor highly pleased at his success, ran to court in triumph, where he ridiculed the ignorance of their devil; the king and the prince of Piedmont joined in the laugh, and the latter for the more effectually silencing this Jesuitical devil, fetched a Chinese psalter from his closet, sent him by the cardinal Tournon as a curiosity; this psalter has, indeed, a Latin translation, but the Chinese leaves could be taken out separately from those containing the translation; with one of these leaves Dr. R. was again dispatched to ask the devil the contents, and in what language it was written. The fathers, who did not desire any more of Dr. R.'s visits, were for keeping out of his way, and the devil threatened if he came again, to expose the minutest transactions of his life. A Theatine, who was an accomplice of the Jesuits, acquainted the Doctor's sister with this circumstance; and she, from an implicit veneration for the clergy, was very urgent with her brother not to have any further concern with this devil, but to no purpose. The Doctor, however, had no great opinion of the devil's omniscience, and told the king, that if the

devil knew all things present or absent, there would be no necessity for princes being at such immense expences in envoys, agents, and spies; they need only maintain a possessed person or two, from whom they might constantly have immediate intelligence of every transaction. After this remark, the Doctor hastened to the house of the possessed, where he found the Jesuits with the girl. On entering the room, after the usual compliments, he acquainted them, that having been informed that a detail was to be given of every transaction of his life, he was desirous of hearing it himself; and began to defy and challenge the devil to begin his story; adding, that if he did not, he would brand him and all who favoured his pretended possession, as knaves and fools. This resolute speech thunder-struck both the patient and the Jesuits; but the latter pretending to shew the Doctor the nearest way out of the house, he soon silenced them, by producing the commission; and insisted, in the name of the prince, that the possessed should declare what was written on the leaf he exhibited, and what language it was written in? The two Jesuits, who were, doubtless, not the most artful of their order, pretended, that the characters might be diabolical, and therefore refused to answer the questions. D. R. answered, that it did not become them to violate the respect due to their prince by such a scandalous suspicion; and insisted, in the name of the king and prince, that they should no longer amuse him with such weak subterfuges. The two Jesuits, after whispering to themselves, answered, That an affair of this kind must be introduced by prayer, and a long series of devotion; wherefore it was necessary to defer it to a more convenient opportunity. The Doctor replied, There was now time sufficient for the purpose, and that he would pray with them. So that they were at last,

notwithstanding their evasions, obliged to begin their ceremonies. During the exorcism, the girl threw her body into strange contortions, and hideous looks which the Jesuits insisted upon were supernatural; but the Doctor promising to mimic her actions, in a manner still more horrible, orders were given her to answer truly to all the various interrogatories. Accordingly, the leaf was laid before her, with the above mentioned questions: upon this she screamed in a terrible manner, desiring it might be taken away, for she could not bear it. At last, after the most pressing arguments, she said it was Hebrew; and that it was a blasphemous writing against the Holy Trinity. This was sufficient for the Doctor; who, after shewing them plainly how ignorant their devil was, returned to court to give an account of his proceedings. The two Jesuits were banished; the two physicians recanted in public; and the parents and relations were enjoined, on pain of being sent to the galleys, never to mention this affair as a diabolical possession; with regard to the girl, she was soon cured by proper medicines. Thus ended this imposture; and with it all notions of sorceries, witchcrafts, and satanical possessions, with which the minds of the people were infected."

As this triumph over priestcraft was, however, only local; and as the multitude are still prone to believe what they do not understand; the clergy, in some places, still continue to propagate the doctrine of evil spirits entering into female bodies, and keeping possession of them till properly exorcised by the church; an opinion, long since, totally eradicated in Protestant countries, and only laughed at in secret by the sensible of the Romish faith.

Before we take our leave of this subject, it may not be improper to observe, that the notions of witchcraft, and of possession, have not only been almost universal among mankind, but have had almost the same ideas every where annexed to them. In Hindostan, an old woman, who had taken upon her the name and character of a witch, raised a rebellion against her sovereign ; and to draw the multitude to her standard, she circulated a report, which was eagerly credited, That on a certain day of the moon, she used to cook, in the skull of an enemy, a mess, composed of owls, bats, snakes, lizards, human flesh, and other horrid ingredients, which she distributed to her followers ; and which, it was believed by the rabble, had a power not only of rendering them void of fear, but also of making them invisible in the day of battle, and transfusing terror into their enemies. Would not one suppose she had read the histories of Greece and Rome, and the plays of Shakespear ? Voyages and travels present us with several histories of uncommon diseases among savages, whose appearances they attributed to the agency of evil spirits ; but from what source they derived these ideas, would be foreign to our purpose to endeavour to determine.

Besides the opinions which have been already mentioned, it has been alleged against women, that they are either incapable of attending to, or at least deaf to reason and conviction. This, however, we venture to affirm, is an error of partiality, or inattention ; for the generality of women can reason in a cool and candid manner on any subject, where none of their interests or passions are concerned ; but such appears to be the acuteness of the female feelings, that wherever passion is opposed to reason, it operates so strongly, that every reasoning power

and faculty is, for a time, totally suspended: the same thing, in a lesser degree, happens to men; and the only difference between the sexes, in this particular, arises from the different degrees of feeling and sensibility.

Women have likewise been charged by the men with inconstancy and a love of change. However justly this may characterise the sex in their pursuit of the fashions and follies of the times, we are of opinion, that in their attachments to the men, it is false. The fair sex are, in general, formed for love; and seem impelled by nature, to fix that passion on some particular object; as a lover, husband, or children; and for want of these, on some darling animal: and this attachment, instead of being changeable, commonly gains strength by time and possession. So strong is this peculiarity of female nature, that many instances have been known, where nuns, for want of any other object, have attached themselves to a particular sister, with a passion little inferior to love; and history affords many instances of women, who, in spite of reason, reflection and revenge, have been inviolably attached to the person of their first ravisher, though they hated, and had been ruined by his conduct.

Among all the signatures of female inferiority, few have been more insisted on, than their want of that courage and resolution so conspicuous in the men. We have already given it as our opinion, that this is no defect in their character; as the Author of nature has, for the most part, placed them in circumstances which do not demand these qualities; and when he has placed them otherwise, he has not withheld them.

Such are the circumstances of the generality of women in savage life, where the countries are thinly inhabited, and commonly infested with wild beasts; and the men, for days and weeks together, abroad on their hunting excursions; in which intervals the women, liable to be attacked by the beasts of prey, and by their enemies, would be in a miserable situation, were they the same weak and timid animals they are in polished society.

Among the Esquimaux, and several other savage people, the women go out to hunt and fish along with the men. In these excursions, it is necessary for them not only to have courage to attack whatever comes in their way, but to encounter the storms of a tempestuous climate, and endure the hardships of famine, and every other evil, incident to such a mode of life, in so inhospitable a country. In some places, where the woods afford little game for the subsistence of the natives, and they are consequently obliged to procure it from the stormy seas which surround them, women hardly show less courage, or less dexterity, in encountering the waves, than the men. In Greenland, they will put off to sea in a vessel; and in a storm, which would make the most hardy European tremble. In many of the islands of the South Sea, they will plunge into the waves, and swim through a surf, which no European dare attempt. In Himia, one of the Greek islands, young girls, before they be permitted to marry, are obliged to fish up a certain quantity of pearls, and dive for them at a certain depth. Many of the other pearl-fisheries are carried on by women, who, besides the danger of diving, are exposed to attacks of the voracious shark, and other ravenous sea-animals, who frequently watch to devour them.

Should it be objected here, that this kind of courage is only mechanical or customary, we would ask such objectors, Whether almost all courage is not of the same nature? Take the most undaunted mortal out of the path which he has constantly trod, and he will not shew the same resolution. A sailor, who unconcernedly steers his bark through the most tremendous waves, would be terrified at following a pack of hounds over hedge and ditch upon a spirited horse, which the well-accustomed jockey would mount with pleasure, and ride with ease. A soldier, who is daily accustomed to face death, when armed with all the horrors of gun-powder and steel, would shrink back with reluctance from the trade of gathering eider down as practised by the simple peasants of Norway, who, for this purpose, let themselves down the most dreadful precipices by the means of a rope. A thousand other instances might be adduced to prove this truth; but as many of them must have fallen under the observation of every one, we shall not enlarge upon them.

That savage women are more generally endowed with courage than those in civil life, appears from what we have now mentioned, as well as from the whole history of mankind; yet it does not from thence follow, that those in civil life are less conspicuous for it, when it is required by the circumstances in which they are placed. And though it is not our intention to give a minute history of every female, who, throwing aside the softness of the sex, has signalized herself in scenes of devastation and fields of blood, we think it incumbent on us to give a few instances, to shew how far the sex have been enabled to exert courage when it became necessary.

In ancient and modern history, we are frequently presented with accounts of women, who, preferring death to slavery or prostitution, sacrificed their lives with the most undaunted courage to avoid them. Apollodorus tells us, that Hercules having taken the city of Troy, prior to the famous siege of it celebrated by Homer, carried away captive the daughters of Laomedon then king. One of these, named Euthira, being left with several other Trojan captives on board the Grecian fleet, while the sailors went on shore to take in fresh provisions, had the resolution to propose, and the power to persuade her companions, to set the ships on fire, and to perish themselves amid the devouring flames. The women of Phœnicia met together before an engagement which was to decide the fate of their city, and having agreed to bury themselves in the flames, if their husbands and relations were defeated, in the enthusiasm of their courage and resolution, they crowned her with flowers who first made the proposal. Many instances occur in the history of the Romans, of the Gauls and Germans, and of other nations in subsequent periods; where women being driven to despair by their enemies, have bravely defended their walls, or waded through fields of blood to assist their countrymen, and free themselves from slavery or from ravishment. Such heroic efforts are beauties, even in the character of the softer sex, when they proceed from necessity: when from choice, they are blemishes of the most unnatural kind, indicating a heart of cruelty, lodged in a form which has the appearance of gentleness and peace.

It has been alleged by some of the writers on human nature, that to the fair sex the loss of beauty is more alarming and insupportable than the loss of life;

but even this loss, however opposite to the feelings of their nature, they have voluntarily consented to sustain, that they might not be the objects of temptation to the lawless ravisher. The nuns of a convent in France, fearing they should be violated by a russian army, which had taken by storm the town in which their convent was situated, at the recommendation of their abbess, mutually agreed to cut off all their noses, that they might save their chastity by becoming objects of disgust instead of desire. Were we to descend to particulars, we could give innumerable instances of women, who, from Semiramis down to the present time, have distinguished themselves by their courage. Such was Penthesilea, who, if we may credit ancient story, led her army of viragoes to the assistance of Priam king of Troy ; Thomyris, who encountered Cyrus king of Persia ; and Thalestris, famous for her fighting, as well as for her amours with Alexander the Great. Such was Boadicea, queen of the Britons, who led on that people to revenge the wrongs done to herself and her country by the Romans. And in later periods, such was the Maid of Orleans, and Margaret of Anjou ; which last, according to several historians, commanded at no less than twelve pitched battles. But we do not choose to multiply instances of this nature, as we have already said enough to shew, that the sex are not destitute of courage when that virtue becomes necessary ; and were they possessed of it, when unnecessary, it would divest them of one of the principal qualities for which we love, and for which we value them. No woman was ever held up as a pattern to her sex, because she was intrepid and brave ; no woman ever conciliated the affections of the men, by rivalling them in what they reckon the peculiar excellencies of their own character.

Although it appears, from what we have related, that an opinion has been pretty generally diffused among mankind that the female sex are in body and in mind greatly inferior to the male ; yet that opinion has not been so universal as to exclude every exception ; for whole nations, in some periods, and some individuals in every period, have held a contrary one. We have already given some account of the veneration in which the ancient Egyptians held their women ; a veneration which seems at least to have continued to the days of Cleopatra. We have seen other nations placing the fountain of honour in the sex, and others again valuing every single woman at the rate of six men. We have seen the Germans admitting them to be present at, and to direct their councils. The Greeks, Romans, and ancient Britons, consecrating them to the sacred function of ministering at the altars of their gods. We have seen the institution of chivalry raising them almost above the level of mortality. But in Italy, even in a period when chivalry had nearly expired, we find them risen in the opinion of the men to a height, at which they had never arrived before. In Rome, when it became so venal, that every thing could be purchased for money, it was no uncommon thing for the wives or mistresses of the rich and opulent to be deified after their death. In modern Italy, this ridiculous dignity was conferred, while living, upon Joan of Arragon, who was one of the most extraordinary women of the sixteenth century, in consequence of a decree passed at Venice, in the year one thousand five hundred and fifty-one, in the academy of the *Dubbiosi*. Upon her sister, the Marchioness de Guast, they conferred the title of a divinity ; and proposed building a temple, in which they should both be worshipped together. But some of

the academicians observing, that two divinities, especially of the feminine gender, would probably not agree together in the same temple ; it was at last resolved, that the Marchionefs should be worshipped by herself, and that to her sister, Joan of Arragon, should be erected a temple, of which she should have the sole possession. It was accordingly raised, and stood for some time the most demonstrative proof of human folly that history has any where recorded.

CHAPTER XX.

Of Dress, Ornament, and the various other Methods whereby Women endeavour to render themselves agreeable to the Men.

THE mutual inclination of the sexes to each other, is the source of many of the useful arts, and perhaps of all the elegant refinements; by constantly exerting itself in strenuous endeavours to please; to be agreeable, and even to be necessary, it gives an additional flavour to the rational pleasures, and multiplies even the conveniences of life.

In the articles of convenience and necessity, we have greatly the advantage over the women, who, weak and helpless in themselves, naturally rely on us for whatever is useful and whatever is necessary. In the articles of pleasure and of refinement, they have as much the advantage of us, and we as naturally look up to them as the source of our pleasures, as they do to us as the source of their sustenance and their fortunes; but besides the advantages of being so necessary to the women on account of procuring them convenience and subsistence, men, by nature bold and intrepid, have a thousand ways of ingratiating themselves into the favour of the sex, and may practise them all with openness and freedom; whereas, women must endeavour to work themselves into our affections by methods silent and disguised; for, should the mask be thrown off, their intentions would not only be frustrated, but the very attempt would fix upon them the character of forwardness,

and want of that modesty which custom has made so essential a part of female excellence. Nothing appears more evident, than that we all wish women to be agreeable, and to insinuate themselves into our favour, but then we wish them to do so only by nature, and not by art, or at least that the little art they employ, should look as like nature as possible.

Compelled to act under these disadvantages, the sex are obliged to lay a perpetual restraint on their behaviour, and often to disclaim by their words, and even their actions, such honest and virtuous attachments as they approve in their hearts. When they, however, direct their attacks upon no particular individual, but only strive to cultivate their minds and adorn their bodies, that they may become the more worthy of being honourably attacked by us, we not only pardon, but love them for those arts, which, by embellishing nature, render her still more agreeable.

Nature has given to men strength, and to women beauty; our strength endears us to them, not only by affording them protection, but by its laborious efforts for their maintenance; their beauty endears them to us, not only by the delight it offers to our senses, but also by that power it has of softening and composing our more rugged passions. Every animal is conscious of its own strength, and of the proper mode of employing it; women, abundantly conscious that theirs lies in their beauty, endeavour with the utmost care to heighten and improve it. To give some account of the many and various methods which have been and still are made use of for this purpose, is the subject upon which we would wish at present to turn the attention of our fair readers.

Next to the procuring of daily food for the sustenance of our bodies, that of clothing them seems the most essentially necessary, and there are few inventions in which more ingenuity has been displayed, or more honour done to the human understanding. The art of clothing ourselves with decent propriety, is one of those improvements which strongly distinguish us from the brutes; that of clothing ourselves with elegance, is one of those which perpetually whet the invention, and distinguish the man of taste from the mere imitator.

Though the use of clothes may appear essentially necessary to us who inhabit the northern extremities of the globe, yet as they could not be so in the warmer climates where they were first invented, some other cause than merely that of securing the body from the injuries of the air must have given birth to them. There are in Asia, which we suppose to have been first inhabited, a variety of places where clothes would not only have been altogether useless, but also burdensome; yet over all this extensive country and in every other part of the world, except among a few of the most savage nations, all mankind have been, and still are, accustomed to use some kind of covering for their bodies. Had clothes been originally intended only for defending the body against cold, it would naturally follow, that they must have been invented and brought to the greatest perfection in the coldest regions, and that the inhabitants of every cold country, impelled by necessity, must at least have discovered the use of them long before the present time; but neither of these is the case, for the art of making garments was invented before any of the colder countries were inhabited, and the inhabitants of some of the most inhospitable regions of the

globe, particularly about the streights of Magellan, are at this day naked.

From these instances it seems plain, that necessity was not the sole cause which first induced men to cover their bodies ; some other reason at least must have co-operated with it, to make the custom so universal ; shame has been alleged as this other reason, and by some said to have been the only cause of the original invention of clothing ; but this opinion is not supported by facts, for shame does not seem natural to mankind ; it is the child of art, and the nearer we approach to nature, the less we are acquainted with it. We have already seen that the natives of Otaheite have no such feelings, or at least if they have, that it is not called forth into action by the same circumstances and situations as among us. It would be endless to enumerate the various countries in which both sexes are entirely naked, and consequently insensible on that account of shame ; or which is still a stronger proof of our assertion, to enumerate those, in which, though clothes are commonly made use of, yet no shame is annexed to uncovering any part of the body. But that we may not build our hypothesis entirely upon the customs of savage life, let us consider the state of infancy and youth in the most polished society. There nothing is more obvious, than that neither of the sexes have any shame on account of being naked when several years old, and that even at the age of seven or eight, exposing those parts of the body that are not usually exposed, is a circumstance to which they pay so little regard, that mothers, and other people who have the care of them, often find great difficulty in teaching them to conform in this particular to the customs of their country, and are frequently obliged even to make use of correction before they can obtain their

purpose. To this teaching, and to this correction, we owe the first sensations of shame, on exposing ourselves otherwise than the mode of our country prescribes, and custom keeps up the sensation ever after; for shame is not excited upon deviating from custom by doing things only which have a real turpitude in their nature, but also by deviating from it in those things that are innocent or indifferent.

If from the foregoing reasons it should appear, that the origin of clothing was neither altogether owing to necessity, nor to shame, then the cause still remains to be discovered; and this cause we suppose to have been a kind of innate principle, especially in the fair sex, prompting them to improve by art those charms bestowed on them by nature. The reasons which induce us to be of this opinion are, because, as we observed above, clothes were invented in a climate where they were but little wanted to defend from the cold, and in a period when the human race were too innocent, as well as too rude and uncultivated, to have acquired the sense of shame; because, also, in looking over the history of mankind it appears, that an appetite for ornament, if we may so call it, is universally diffused among them, wherever they have the least leisure from the indispensable duty of procuring daily food, or are not depressed with the most absolute slavery; every savage people, even though totally naked, shew their love of ornament by marks, stains, and paintings of various kinds upon their bodies, and these frequently of the most shining and gaudy colours. Every people, whose country affords any materials, and who have acquired any art in fabricating them, shew all the ingenuity they can in decking and adorning themselves to the best advantage, with what they have thus fabricated. These circumstances strongly demonstrate,

that the love of ornament is a natural principle, which shews itself in every climate, and in every country, almost without one single exception. But further, were clothes intended only to defend from the cold, or to cover shame, the most plain and simple would serve these purposes; at least as well, if not better, than the most gay and ornamental; but the plain and the simple, every where give way to the gay and the ornamental. Ornament, therefore, must have been one of the causes which gave birth to the origin of clothing.

As there is in human nature a strong propensity to the love of variety, this might likewise contribute to the use of clothing: absolute nakedness is the most destructive of variety, having nothing to present but the same object, in the same shape and colour, and without any other variations of circumstances than what arise from change of attitude: such uniform and unvaried objects, as they make no new impressions on the senses, are not likely to excite, and still less likely to continue the passion of love; to do either of which, it is necessary that our senses should be struck with a variety of appearances. In countries where women are constantly in the original dress of nature, they are much less objects of desire, than where they are enabled by dress to vary their figure and their shape, constantly to strike us with some new appearance, and to shew, or conceal from us, a part of their charms, as it shall best answer their purpose. It is probable that women became early acquainted with all the disadvantages of appearing perpetually the same; and that to remedy them, they contrived, by degrees, to alter themselves by the assistance of dress and ornament.

Because savage life is the state that approaches the nearest to nature ; and because, in this state, women sometimes neglect every kind of dress and ornament, it has therefore been concluded, that to dress, and to ornament themselves, is a passion not natural to the sex : but this conclusion will be found to be improperly drawn, by considering, that wherever women totally neglect ornament and dress, it is either where they have no materials for these purposes, as in the Streights of Magellan ; or where they are so depressed with slavery and ill usage, as on the banks of the Oroonoko, that even a passion so natural, is totally suppressed by the severity of their fate ; for even in the most savage states of mankind, if the women are not depressed with abject slavery, they make every effort, and strain every nerve to get materials of finery and of dress. On the coast of Patagonia, where the natives of both sexes are almost entirely naked, the women, in point of ornament, were much on an equality with the men, and painted nearly in the same manner ; and one of them, finer than any of her male or female companions, had not only bracelets on her arms, but strings of beads also interwoven with her hair.— Among many of the tribes of wandering Tartars, who are almost as rude and uncultivated as imagination can paint them, the women, even though in a great measure confined, are loaded with a profusion of the richest ornaments their husbands or relations can procure for them. But it would be needless to adduce any more proofs in support of our opinion ; the whole history of mankind, ancient and modern, is so full of them, that unless we draw general conclusions from particular instances, we cannot entertain a doubt, that the love of finery is more natural to the other sex than to ours.

Taking it then for granted, that the love of dress is a natural appetite, we may reasonably conclude, that it began to shew itself in a very early period of antiquity ; but in what manner it was first exerted, and what materials originally offered themselves for its gratification, are subjects of which we know but little : the first garment mentioned by history, was composed of leaves sewed together, but with what they were sewed, we have no account ; from this hint, it is reasonable to presume, that mankind, in the first ages, made use of such materials for dress as nature presented, and needed the least preparation. Strabo tells us, that some nations made use of the bark of trees, others of herbs or reeds, rudely woven together : but of all other materials, the skins of animals seem to have been the most universally used in the ages we are considering : but being then ignorant of the method of making these skins flexible by the art of tanning, or of separating the hair from them, they wore them in the same state in which they came from the bodies of the animals : finding them, however, cumbersome and inconvenient in this condition, it is natural to suppose, that they soon applied themselves to discover some method of rendering them more pliable, and better adapted to their purposes ; but when, or where they discovered this method is uncertain. The ancient annals of China inform us, that Tchifang, one of their first kings, taught them to prepare the skins of animals for garments, by taking off the hair with a wooden roller ; but even after the skins of animals were, by the various methods practised in different countries, rendered something more convenient, they were not naturally adapted to form a neat and commodious covering for the human body ; many of them were too little, others too large ; those that were too large, it was an easy matter to make less at pleasure ;

but those that were too little, could not be enlarged without the art of sewing them together; an art, which a great part of mankind were long in discovering. Thread does not appear to have been among the most early inventions, as we may suppose from finding many savage nations at this day without it, and without thread they could do nothing. Hesiod tells us, That, instead of thread, the ancients used the sinews of animals dried, and split into small fibres. Thorns, sharp bones, and the like, supplied the place of needles; and of those rude materials, and in this rude manner were the clothes, or rather coverings, of the first ages made; but we must observe, that they were not fitted to the body as at present; but all loose, and nearly of an equal size; a circumstance strongly proved by the many changes of raiment which were in the possession of the great, and of which they made presents to such as they were inclined to honour, and in which they used to clothe the guests who came to visit them; purposes which they never could have answered, had they been all exactly fitted to the body of the original owner; but this circumstance is also further proved from the clothing of those nations which retain still the strongest traces of antiquity. The garments of the Welch, and Scotch Highlanders, are, at this day, so wide and loose, that they may easily be applied to the use of any wearer.

As society began to improve, and the sexes became more ambitious of rendering themselves agreeable to each other, they endeavoured to discover such materials as could be made into garments of a more commodious and agreeable nature than the leaves or bark of trees, or the skins of animals; and their first efforts were probably made upon camel's hair; a material which they still work into clothing

in the East. From camel's hair the transition to wool was easy and natural; and it would soon be found, that either of them formed a covering, not only more pliable, warm, and substantial; but also more elegant, than any thing they had before been accustomed to. At what period they first invented the art of converting these materials into garments is uncertain: all we know is, that it was very early; for in the patriarchal ages, we are told of the great care taken by the inhabitants of Palestine and Mesopotamia, in sheering their sheep; the wool of which they, no doubt, had the art of making into covering and to ornament. The uses which were now made of wool and of camel's hair, might possibly suggest the first ideas of separating into distinct threads the fibres of plants, so as to convert them into the same uses: however that be, it is certain, that this art was early cultivated. In the plagues which were sent to distress Egypt, on account of the Israelites, we read of the destruction of the flax; and in periods a little posterior, we have frequent mention made of the fine linen of Egypt. Such were the materials in which men clothed themselves in the first ages. We shall now take a short view of what they had for ornament and show.

In the days of Abraham, the art of ornamenting the body with various materials was far from being unknown to many of the Asiatic nations; they had then jewels of several kinds, as well as vessels of gold and silver. Eliezar, Abraham's servant, when he went to court Rebecca, for Isaac his master's son, carried along with him jewels of gold, and silver, and bracelets, and rings, as presents to procure him a favourable reception. We find the same Rebecca afterwards in possession of perfumed garments, which she put on her son Jacob,

to enable him to cheat his father, by passing himself upon him for his brother Esau. Perfumes and odours must then have been introduced; and when they had arrived at the luxury of perfuming their apparel, we may conclude, that the modes of dressing in those days were not so plain and simple as some would endeavour to persuade us. Jacob gave his beloved son Joseph a coat of divers colours supposed to be made of cotton, and finer than those of his brethren; which was the cause of their selling him for a slave into Egypt. But notwithstanding all this finery, the people of the primitive ages were not acquainted with the art of dressing gracefully; their upper garment was only a piece of cloth, in which they wrapped themselves; nor had they any other contrivance to keep these firm about them, than by holding them round their bodies. Many uncultivated nations at this time exhibit the same rude appearance. We have a striking instance of it in Otaheite, where the people wrap themselves in pieces of cloth of a length almost incredible; and the higher the rank of the wearer, so much the more is the length of his cloth augmented. In the patriarchal ages, the Israelites had advanced a few steps beyond the simplicity we have now described; they had garments made with sleeves, and cloaks which they threw over all; but their shoes were like those of the neighbouring nations, only composed of pieces of leather, to defend the soles of their feet, and fastened on with thongs. So slightly defended, they never could travel on foot, nor hardly stir abroad, without having their feet much defiled; it was therefore always necessary to wash them when they got home, a ceremony often mentioned in the scripture, which the servant generally performed to his master, and the master often to his visitors and guests.

Amid all these anecdotes of the dress of the first ages, it is not a little surprising, that we have no account of what was worn by the women, except the few ornaments we have already mentioned being given to Rebecca. But though we cannot now conjecture what was their dress, we are assured, that it differed on account of different circumstances.—For Tamar, when she went to sit by the way-side, to impose herself upon Judah for an harlot, was habited in the garments peculiar to a widow, which she put off, and dressed herself in such as were peculiar to an harlot. Whence it appears, that not only widows and harlots, but perhaps several other conditions were distinguished from one another by particular dresses ; a strong proof that dress was in these periods a circumstance of no small importance, and greatly attended to ; for, where dress is only in its infancy, it is not made use of as a badge to distinguish one person from another ; but in polished nations, it is not only made use of to distinguish rank, but even professions and circumstances are marked out by it.

Some of the neighbouring nations, and particularly the Midianites, had, in the primitive ages, carried their attention to dress still farther than the Israelites ; for we read in the book of Judges, of their gold chains, bracelets, rings, tablets, purple ornaments of their kings, and even gold chains or collars for the necks of their camels. Though the dress of the common people of Egypt seems to have been simple, yet the great made use of a variety of decorations. They had changes of raiment. Joseph gave changes of raiment to each of his brethren. They wore garments made of cotton, and costly chains about their necks. As to the dress of the women, all we know of it is, that they had only one kind, whereas the

men had more; whether by one kind of dress only, is meant, that all their variety of changes were made in one fashion, or of the same sort of materials, is uncertain; but however this be, they had, besides their clothes, a variety of ornaments; for Moses tells us, that when the Israelites finally departed from Egypt, they were ordered to borrow jewels of gold and jewels of silver, to put them on their sons and daughters, and to spoil the Egyptians. Nor need we wonder, that they were possessed of these things at the period when the Israelites went out from them, for even in the days of Joseph, luxury and magnificence were carried to a great height; they had, besides their jewels, vessels of gold and silver, rich stuffs and perfumes; were waited upon by a great number of slaves, and drawn in chariots, of which they had several sorts; they had embroideries of various kinds which were also used among the neighbouring nations; for Moses mentions works of embroidery, with an agreeable variety; and Pliny tells us, that they painted linen by laying certain drugs upon it.—From all these anecdotes, as well as from the immense sums which we have already taken notice of being allotted to the toilette of the queens of Egypt, we may conclude, that the dress of their women was at least costly, if not elegant. We shall finish what we had to say on this subject by observing, that what most particularly distinguished this people, was their attention to cleanliness; they not only kept their garments exceedingly neat, but the opulent had them washed every time they put them on.

That beauty was in all ages the subject of praise and of flattery, we may infer from the nature of man as well as learn from the songs of the ancient bards. When women were praised, when they were flattered on this subject, it was natural for them to wish

to see those charms of which they had heard so much; but what all their ingenuity could not discover, they were directed to by chance. Some person, looking on the clear surface of a smooth pool, saw his own image in the water; whether this furnished the first hint that every polished surface would have the same effect, or whether chance directed to that discovery also, is uncertain, but we find the use of mirrors in a very early period in Egypt; and from them, probably, the Israelites first borrowed that art; for mirrors were common among them in their passage through the wilderness, as appears from Moses having made his laver of brass, of the mirrors offered by the women who attended at the door of the tabernacle. The art of making mirrors of glass was not known in these days. The first and best are said to have been made long after, of a sand found on the coasts of the Tyrian sea; those then in use were made of highly polished metal. In Egypt, and in Palestine, they were of brass. When the ancient Peruvians were first discovered, their mirrors were of brass: and, at this day, in the East, they are commonly made of that, or some other metal, capable of receiving a fine polish.

The use of mirrors, among the Egyptians and Israelites, is a proof that the ages under review, were not so rude and simple as some would insinuate. Many nations at this period have not arrived to the knowledge of mirrors. The people of New Zealand were surprised at this mode of viewing their own faces, and behaved on the occasion with a mixture of the most ridiculous grimace and merriment. Almost every writer of voyages into savage countries, presents us with histories of a similar nature. How rapid is the progress of human genius in some countries? How slow in others? Whence arises this diver-

sity? Is it from climate, from necessity, or from a difference in the original powers and faculties of the mind? Is it possible that savages never have seen themselves in the water? If they have, why should they be so surpris'd at seeing themselves in a looking-glass?

The face is the part of the body where female charms and graces are most conspicuously placed; but as none could see her own face without the assistance of art; before the use of mirrors, a woman must have entirely depended on the relation of others, whether she was beautiful or otherwise; on her own dexterity, or the word of her hand-maid, she must have rested the important affair of having her head-dress properly adjusted, and the colour suited to her complexion; points in which she might often be deceived, but which the use of a mirror put in her own power to discover. Mirrors, therefore, with regard to their utility in female life, may be justly reckoned among the most valuable of human inventions. What kind of dress was used for the head in the primitive ages we know not; all that we have any account of concerning it is, that on some occasions the women used veils. If the dress of the head was however as simple in its construction, as that of the body, the adjusting of it would require but little time, and still less ingenuity.

CHAPTER XXI.

The same Subject continued.

IN periods so remote as these we are now considering, it is as impossible for us to give any distinct detail of the various dresses used for the body, as of those used for the head; we have neither descriptions nor monuments left to elucidate so dark a subject; nor, if we had, is it our intention to give a minute and circumstantial detail of every article used at the female toilette: we only mean to point out how far dress has been an object of general attention, and in what manner this attention has exerted itself; and we shall leave our readers to make their own reflections, how far a knowledge of the care bestowed on this article may elucidate the manners of the times, and how these manners might influence the modes of dressing.

Among other subjects of popular declamation, the present luxury of dress affords a constant opportunity of endeavouring to persuade us, that our own times surpass in this article every thing that has gone before us; and that our own country surpasses all the world. But this is no more than mere declamation; for if we look back even to very remote periods of antiquity, we shall find that the same thing was then the subject of declamation as well as at present. The third chapter of Isaiah presents us with an account of the finery of the daughters of Babylon, which no modern extravagance has hitherto equalled. Homer dresses several of his heroes and hero-

ines with a magnificence to which we are strangers ; and Cleopatra exhibited an extravagance in her dress and entertainments, which in our times would beggar the most wealthy potentate on the globe. Even in the days of Moses, they were acquainted with the art of polishing precious stones ; and not only knew how to set, but what appears more extraordinary, were also acquainted with the art of engraving them. The ephod of Aaron was adorned with two onyxes set in gold, on each of which the names of six tribes of Israel were engraved. The breast-plate of judgment, shone with twelve precious stones of different colours, upon every one of which was the name of one of the twelve tribes. We might easily multiply instances to shew the splendour and magnificence of the ancients ; but those already given are sufficient to teach us how little reason there is for declaimers to vilify the present times, nor have they more reason to exclaim against this country ; whoever has seen the splendour and magnificence of the East, must laugh at every satire on that of Europe.

Notwithstanding all the precious stones made use of by the ancients, it is probable, that they were unacquainted with the diamond, which modern refinement has stamped with such an immense value ; some have imagined, that Homer and Hesiod have mentioned this stone by the name of Adamas and Adamantinos ; but it has been more judiciously supposed that these Greek terms have not the least relation to it ; and Pliny, who has taken much pains to investigate the discovery of precious stones, can find no mention of this till a period near the beginning of the Christian æra. But long after the discovery of diamonds, they did not, for want of being properly polished, display half the lustre they do at present ;

the art of giving them this lustre by polishing them with their own dust, is but a late invention, and ascribed to Lewis de Berquen, a native of Bruges, who lived only about three hundred years ago.

A desire of attracting the public attention, naturally first prompted the human race to ornament themselves with the most shining and brilliant things which nature could supply. Among all these, the diamond, after it was discovered, held the first rank; it was, therefore, natural, that the mines which produce it should be sought after with avidity, and preserved with care. The oldest diamond mine that we know of, is in the river Gouel, which is one of those that empty themselves into the Ganges. The chain of mountains which runs between Cape Comorin and Bengal has yielded a large quantity of diamonds; they are there found in clusters, lying at from six to twelve feet below the surface of the ground. The isle of Borneo, according to some travellers, produces a few diamonds; more are found in Visapour and Golconda; the mines of Visapour have been known about three hundred years, and those of Golconda not above half that time. About the beginning of the present century some slaves, who were condemned to look for gold at Sierra-do-frio in Brazil, used to find some little bright stones, which they threw away as of no consequence; a few of these, however, being preserved, and shown to the governor-general of the mines, he had them examined by able artists, who declared that they were fine diamonds. Soon after this, search was made for them with such success, that in a few years the Rio-Janeiro fleet brought to Lisbon eleven hundred and forty-six ounces of them. This produced such a plenty, that their price was considerably diminished; but the Portuguese ministry, in order to reinstate them in their

original value, conferred on a company the exclusive privilege of searching for and selling them; and lest the avidity of the company should frustrate the intention of the ministry, it was stipulated, that no more than six hundred slaves should be employed in the mines, and that all diamonds exceeding a certain weight should be the property of the king. Avarice tramples upon every right human and divine. It was not thought sufficient that death should be the consequence of encroaching on this privilege of the company; but, as a further security, it was thought necessary to depopulate all the places that lay in the neighbourhood of the mines, and turn the whole into a solitary waste, inaccessible to human foot. This waste at present comprehends a space of three hundred miles, in which there is only one large village, inhabited entirely by the slaves of the company. So short an account of this the most important of all bagatelles, we hope our readers will not consider as foreign to our subject, especially as it is now not only such an article of commerce and luxury, but also the ornament which, of all others, is most eagerly sought after by the fair sex, and the badge which distinguishes opulence and quality from the lower and more humble ranks of life.

Individuals of the human species, like those of all others, grow old, and suffer by decay; but the species itself, always the same, is constantly distinguished by the same propensities, and actuated by the same passions; it treads in the same path that it did five thousand years ago; dignity and power were then, as well as now, in many places conferred by opulence, and distinguished by ornament and dress; and beauty was fond of adding to nature by all the decorations and embellishments of art. Aaron, as

we have already seen, was distinguished by a great profusion of ornaments : the greatest part of the heroes of Homer were distinguished by the richness and brilliancy of their armour; and the kings of the ancient Medes and Persians, and of many of the neighbouring nations, had golden scepters, as ensigns of their power and authority.

But to return from the subject of badges of distinction, to the dress and ornament of common life. In ancient Babylon, the men wore stuffs wrought with gold and silver, ornamented with costly embroidery, and enriched with rubies, emeralds, sapphires, pearls, and other jewels, of which the East has always been remarkably productive; collars of gold were also a part of their finery; such was the dress of their men; that of their women has not been so particularly described; but when we consider the rank which women held among them, and the natural propensity of the sex to dress and ornament, we have reason to believe it was still more costly and magnificent, especially as we so frequently find the prophets reproving the daughters of Babylon for their pride, and the vanity which they displayed in the variety and splendour of their attire. To the costliness of the materials of their garments, the Babylonish women frequently added the expense of the most precious perfumes, with which they perfumed not only their apparel, but also their bodies; and as it is well known that the perfumes of Babylon where every where famous for their superior excellence, and bore an exceeding high price, this luxurious article must have added greatly to the expence of the female toilette.

Dress and ornament did not less excite the attention of the Medes and Persians than of the Babylo-

nians ; the women of their kings were habited in all the pomp of Eastern magnificence, and the revenues of whole provinces were frequently employed in decorating her who happened to be the greatest favourite. The queens had certain districts set apart for maintaining their toilette and wardrobe, one for the veil, and another for the girdle, &c. and these districts took their names from the different parts of the dress to which they were appropriated, as the queen's girdle, the queen's mantle, &c. The Medes, when a distinct nation, appear to have paid the greatest attention to dress, for the luxury and magnificence of which, they are very frequently exclaimed against by the writers of antiquity. They wore long flowing robes with large hanging sleeves ; these robes were interwoven with a variety of different colours, all of the most gaudy and shining nature : and besides, they were richly embroidered with gold and silver. They were likewise loaded with bracelets, gold chains, and necklaces adorned with precious stones, and wore upon the head a kind of tiara or high pointed cap, exceedingly magnificent ; nay, so far had they carried their attention to every species of decoration, that they even tinged their eyes and eye-brows, painted their faces, and mingled artificial with their natural hair. Such, in the articles of dress and ornament, was the care and attention of the men ; antiquity has left us in the dark concerning that of their women, and has only informed us in general, that they were exceedingly beautiful. We may, therefore, reasonably suppose, that in a country where dress was so much cultivated, they did not leave those charms of nature unassisted, but strove to improve them by every ornament of art.

Notwithstanding what we have now mentioned, in looking over the history of antiquity, we are apt at first view to imagine, that the ancient heroes despised dress, as an effeminacy in which it was below their notice to indulge themselves. Hercules had only a lion's skin flung over his shoulders, and a variety of the heroes of Homer, and the other ancient writers, are wrapped in those of the different animals they had destroyed; but this seems only to have been the mode in which they clothed themselves in ordinary life, or perhaps rather when they went to war, or to hunting, in order to make them appear more terrible; for on public occasions, when ceremony was thought necessary, they had other garments of a very different nature. The mantle of Ulysses is described by Homer as an extraordinary piece of finery, and several of the rest of his heroes are now and then introduced in the utmost magnificence of dress that gods and men could fabricate for them; even in the heroic ages, the Greeks wore clothes adorned with gold and silver, and ladies of distinction had long flowing robes fastened with clasps of gold, and bracelets of the same metal, adorned with amber; nor were they then unconscious that nature might be improved by art, for they endeavoured to improve their complexions by several sorts of paint, in composing and laying on of which, they were scarcely less dexterous than the ladies of the first rank and fashion at Versailles. But with all these loads of finery, the ancients were strangers to elegance, and even to convenience, in their dress. In the times we are speaking of, the Greeks had no shoes, but only a kind of sandals, which they put on when they went out; neither did they know the use of breeches, stockings, nor drawers, nor pins, nor buckles, nor buttons, nor pockets; they had not invented the art of lining clothes, and when

cold, were obliged to supply the defect of lining, by throwing one garment over another.

As the Greeks emerged from the barbarity of the heroic ages, among other articles of culture, they began to bestow more attention on the convenience and elegance of dress. At Athens, the ladies commonly employed the whole morning in dressing themselves in a decent and becoming manner; their toilette consisted in paints and washes, of such a nature as to clean and beautify the skin, and they took great care to clean their teeth, an article too much neglected: some also blackened their eye-brows, and, if necessary, supplied the deficiency of the vermilion on their lips, by a paint said to have been exceedingly beautiful. At this time the women in the Greek islands make much use of a paint which they call Sulama, which imparts a beautiful redness to the cheeks, and gives the skin a remarkable gloss. Possibly this may be the same with that made use of in the times we are considering; but however that be, some of the Greek ladies at present gild their faces all over on the day of their marriage, and consider this coating as an irresistible charm; and in the island of Scios, their dress does not a little resemble that of ancient Sparta, for they go with their bosoms uncovered, and with gowns which only reach to the calf of their leg, in order to shew their fine garters, which are commonly red ribbons curiously embroidered. But to return to ancient Greece, the ladies spent likewise a part of their time in composing head-dresses, and though we have reason to suppose that they were not then so preposterously fantastic as those presently composed by a Parisian milliner, yet they were probably objects of no small industry and attention, especially as we find that they then dyed their hair, perfumed it with the most

costly effences, and by the means of hot irons disposed of it in curls, as fancy or fashion directed. Their clothes were made of stuffs so extremely light and fine as to shew their shapes, without offending against the rules of decency. At Sparta, the case was widely different; we shall not describe the dress of the women, it is sufficient to say, that it has been loudly complained of by almost every ancient author who has treated on the subject.

From what has now been related it appears, that the women of antiquity were not less solicitous about their persons than the moderns, and that the materials for decorating them, were neither so few, nor so simple, as has been by some imagined; facts which, in the review of the Romans, will appear still more conspicuous. In the more early periods of that great republic, the Romans, in their persons as well as in their manners, were simple and unadorned; we shall, therefore, pass over the attire of these times, and confine our observations to those when the wealth of the whole world centered within the walls of Rome.

The Roman ladies went to bathe in the morning, and from thence returned to the toilette, where women of rank and fortune had a number of slaves to attend on and do every thing for them, while themselves, looking constantly in their glasses, practised various attitudes, studied the airs of negligence, the smiles that best became them, and directed the placing of every lock of the hair, and every part of the head-dress. Coquettes, ladies of morose temper, and those whose charms had not attracted so much notice as they expected, often blamed the slaves who dressed them for this want of success; and if we may believe Juvenal, sometimes chastised them for it with the most unfeeling severity. At first, the maids who

attended the toilette were to assist in adjusting every part of the dress, but afterward each had her proper task assigned her; one had the combing, curling, and dressing of the hair; another managed the perfumes; a third disposed of the jewels, as fancy or fashion directed; a fourth laid on the paint and cosmetics: all these, and several others, had names expressive of their different employments: but besides these, whose business it was to put their hands to the labour of the toilette, there were others, who, acting in a station more exalted, only attended to give their opinion and advice, to declare what colours most suited the complexion, and what method of dressing gave the greatest additional lustre to the charms of nature. To this important council of the toilette we have no account of the male sex being ever admitted: this useful, though perhaps indelicate invention was reserved for the ladies of Paris, who wisely considering, that as they dress only for the men, the men must be the best judges of what will please themselves.

As the loves and the graces more particularly reside in the face, the Roman ladies were hardly more attentive to the face itself, than to the decorations that surrounded it; they had combs of box and of ivory for the hair, the curls of which they fastened with gold and silver pins; besides these, they commonly stuck into their hair, pins set with pearl, and plaited it with chains and rings of gold, or with purple or white ribbons, shining with jewels and precious stones; they had also in their ears, rings of gold, loaded with pearl, or other jewels. The modern gigantic head-dress of the present time, with all its combs, and wool, and curls, is not the invention of this age; it is at least as old as the times we are delineating: the Roman ladies, by the assistance of borrowed hair or wool, decorated their heads with

treffes, knots, and curls, all so variously disposed, and in so many different stories one above another, that the whole looked like a regular piece of architecture: nor was it always necessary that a lady should spend her precious time in sitting to have her upper apartments built upon in this manner; the Romans, as well as the moderns, knew how to mingle convenience with folly, they could purchase in the shops, as at present, a head-dress ready built, which they had only the trouble to clap on. It would be tedious to mention the various forms in which these voluminous head-dresses were constructed; suffice it to say, that there were some modes of dressing the head which were considered as distinguishing marks of modesty and virtue, while others were as strong indications of lewdness and debauchery.

But the disposing of the hair in various forms and figures; the interweaving it with ribbons, jewels, and gold; were not the only methods they made use of to make it agreeable to taste; light-coloured hair had the preference of all others; both men and women therefore dyed their hair of this colour, then perfumed it with sweet-scented essences, and powdered it with gold dust; a custom of the highest extravagance, which the Romans brought from Asia, and which, according to Josephus, was practised among the Jews. White hair-powder was not then invented, nor did the use of it come into fashion till towards the end of the sixteenth century; the first writer who mentions it is L'Etoile, who relates, that in the year 1593, the Nuns walked the streets of Paris curled and powdered; from that time the custom of powdering has become so common, that in most places of Europe, but especially in France, it

is used by both sexes, and by people of all ages, ranks and conditions.

Such were the ornaments with which the Roman ladies surrounded the face; those of the face itself consisted of cosmetics, paints, and even pastes; of the cosmetics, it would be superfluous to give any account, as it is presumed modern invention has furnished the present times with such as are much preferable. Chalk and white lead were then used as paints, for we are told by Martial, that Fabula was afraid of the rain, on account of the chalk on her face; and Sabella of the Sun, because of the ceruse with which she was painted: the famous Poppæa, who was first the mistress, and afterwards the wife of Nero, made use of an unctuous paint which hardened upon the face, and was left there till she chose to take it off by warm milk; its effects were to soften the skin, and improve the complexion; and as it originated from an empress, it soon became so fashionable at Rome, that it was used almost by every woman when at home, and, in the common phrase of the times, was called the domestic face, and if we may credit Juvenal, the only one which frequently was known to the husband, the natural, or more charming one which it covered, being reserved for occasional lovers. In order also to rectify what they supposed nature had made amiss, they had depilatory plaisters to take off superfluous hairs from the eye-brows, or other parts of the face, where they judged that they were imperfections; nor was the art of painting, and otherwise making artificial eye-brows, unknown to them. The teeth, we may readily believe, were also an object of much attention; they were not only cleaned and whitened by a variety of methods, but artificial ones were placed in the room of such as age or accident had destroyed; but the

materials of which they were made seem not to have been judiciously chosen. ‘Thou hast only three teeth,’ says Martial to Maxima, ‘and these are of box, varnished over.’ But with all this art, there were some defects for which they were not provided with any remedy: ‘If,’ says the same poet to Lælia, ‘thou art not ashamed to make use of borrowed teeth and hair, yet still thou must be embarrassed; What wilt thou do for an eye, there are none to be bought? Had the unfortunate Lælia lived in our more inventive days, even this defect might have been supplied; though perhaps an eye made by the Baron de Wensel, is not altogether so killing as one fabricated by nature. To sum up all, the Roman ladies took great care that their skins should be kept perfectly clean and sweet, by a constant practice of bathing; and some of them, not contented with common water for this purpose, used to mix it with a variety of detergent or sweet-scented ingredients: Poppæa, whom we have before mentioned, had every day the milk of five hundred asses made into a bath, which she supposed gave her skin a softness and polish beyond that of any other woman.

In the earlier periods of the Roman republic, as among every uncultivated people, there was but little difference between the dress of the men and the women, the toga being the common garment of both; at length, however, a difference was introduced, and the garment called Stola became the distinction of the women, as the toga was of the men. It would be dry and insipid to give a minute detail of the form and fashion of these and several other kinds of dress used by the Romans, a much more adequate idea of which can be formed by a single glance at a bust or drawing, than by the most accurate description. We shall, therefore, only observe, that the

most common materials of which their clothes were composed, were wool and flax; materials less fine indeed than those we have at present, but to supply that defect, they were richly embroidered, and frequently loaded with different kinds of jewels. Linnen only became known to the Romans in the time of the Emperors; and, perhaps, nearly about the same time, the use of silk was introduced among them; but it was long so scarce and expensive, that a small quantity of it was only mixed with wool or flax in the composition of their finest stuffs. Heliogabalus is the first on record who had a robe made entirely of silk. At that time it must have been exceedingly dear, for even more than fifty years afterwards it was sold for its weight in gold; as we learn from the answer of Aurelian to his wife, when she desired him to let her have a silk mantle, ‘I shall take care,’ said he, ‘not to buy threads for their weight in gold.’

As silk is the most beautiful and elegant material which has ever been made use of to adorn their fair forms whose history we are writing, we hope our readers will not consider a short account of it as foreign to our purpose. Silk is said to have been brought from Persia into Greece three hundred and twenty-three years before Christ, and from India to Rome in the year two hundred and seventy-four after Christ. During the reign of Tiberius, a law was made in the senate, forbidding men to debase themselves by wearing silk, which was fit only for women. It was in these days supposed to grow like cotton upon trees. In the year five hundred and fifty-five, two monks brought from Cerinda, in the East Indies, to Constantinople, the eggs of some silk-worms, which having hatched in a dunghill, they fed the young insects with mulberry leaves, and by this management they

soon multiplied to such a degree, that manufactures of silk were erected at Constantinople, at Athens, at Thebes, and at Borinth. In the year eleven hundred and thirty, Roger, king of Sicily, brought manufacturers of silk from Greece, and settled them at Palermo, where they taught the Sicilians the art of breeding the silk worms, and of spinning and weaving the silk. From Sicily, the art was carried into Italy, from thence to Spain : and a little before the time of Francis the first, it was brought to the south of France. Henry the Fourth of France was at great pains to introduce manufactures of silk into his kingdom, contrary to the advice of his favourite minister the Duke de Sully, and by his perseverance, at last brought them to a tolerable perfection. In the year twelve hundred and eighty-six, the ladies of some noblemen first appeared in silk mantles in England, at a ball in Kennelworth Castle in Warwickshire. In the year sixteen hundred and twenty, the art of weaving silk was first introduced into England, and in the year seventeen hundred and nineteen, Lombe's machine for throwing silk was erected at Derby, a piece of mechanism which well deserves the attention and applause of every beholder ; it contains twenty-six thousand five hundred and eighty-six wheels, the whole of which receive their motion from one wheel that is turned by water. Such was the introduction of silk, but it continued long too scarce and dear to be applied to common use. Henry the Second of France was the first in Europe who wore silk stockings ; in the reign of Henry the Seventh, no silk stockings had ever appeared in England ; Edward the Sixth, his son and successor, was presented by Sir Thomas Gresham with the first pair that ever were worn in this country ; and the present was at that time much talked of as valuable and uncommon. Queen Elizabeth was also presented

with a pair of black filk stockings by her filk-woman, and was so fond of them, that we are told by Holwell, she never wore any other kind afterwards.— From these times, however, filk has, in every shape, become so uncommon in this country, that it is now no longer, as formerly, the distinguishing badge of rank and opulence, but to be found among people of every station, from the throne to the dung-hill.

But to return to our subject. The most common, as well as most honourable colour among the Romans, except the purple, only allotted to their emperors, was white. It was long before the fashion of wearing garments of various colours was introduced among them; white was not only the common colour of the garments worn by the ladies, but also of their shoes, during the time of the republic. Aurelian granted them a power of wearing red ones; and, at the same time, prohibited all the men from that privilege, except himself and successors in the empire.

Shoes, with high heels, were first invented at Rome; Augustus wore them, in order to make himself appear taller; the priests put them on at their solemn sacrifices, and ladies of distinction at balls and public meetings. The shoes of great men were adorned with gold, and we have reason to believe, though it is not recorded, that the ladies copied their example. Heliogabalus adorned his shoes with precious stones, finely engraved by the greatest artists: the succeeding emperors, imitating the pattern he had shewn them, loaded their shoes with a variety of ornaments; and had the Roman eagle, for the most part, embroidered on them, studded round with pearls and diamonds; but we shall cease to wonder at this foolish extravagance of

the emperors, when we are told, that even private citizens of Rome, besides the ornaments on the upper parts of their shoes, had the soles of them sometimes made of gold.

We have already seen, that the ancient inhabitants of the North had a much greater regard for their women than any other people, who were equally rude and uncultivated : it would, therefore, be offering an indignity to these women, to suppose, that they, in their turn, did not endeavour, to please and become agreeable to the men, by such arts of dress and ornament as were then known among them, as well as by the virtues of chastity and obedience, for which they were so remarkably distinguished. We are not, however, to suppose, that in these articles we shall find them equal to many of the ancient nations we have hitherto mentioned. The countries they inhabited, in themselves barren and inhospitable, hardly afforded any thing to pamper luxury : all the necessary arts were either totally unknown, or only in a state of infancy ; of the elegant ones, the northerns were entirely ignorant. They were constantly, it is true, at war ; but these wars were not, like those of Rome, undertaken, to subdue neighbouring nations ; and by plundering them, to accumulate the means of splendour and magnificence ; but generally either to revenge private quarrels, or carry home with them a load of provisions to be wasted in riotous festivity. From all these causes, the materials which furnished the female toilette must have been but few and inelegant. The hair, which when properly managed is, without any ornament, one of the greatest beauties of the sex, seems to have been the object of their chief attention. It was sometimes tied and knotted on the crown of their heads, from whence falling

down, it hung negligently on their backs and shoulders. Among some tribes, they had acquired the art of curling it; but among the greatest part, it flowed loose and carelessly in the wind. A linen shift, without any sleeves, and over this a cloak of the skins of such animals as their husbands had killed in hunting, seems to have been their most magnificent finery. Where nature has been liberal, she requires but little assistance from art. Such was the case with the women of the nations we are now considering; they were generally beautiful, having lively blue eyes, large but regular features, a fine complexion, and a skin, which, for whiteness, equalled the snow upon their mountains. Their stature was tall, their shape easy and majestic; and, to crown the whole, this majesty was blended with all that softness which so peculiarly characterises the sex, and which renders them at once the objects of our admiration and our love. So accomplished, they had little occasion for the toilette, and they made as little use of it; where nature had done so much, art would only have spoiled the work.

We shall not endeavour to developé the various modes of dress, which were the offspring of fancy, fashion, or necessity, among the descendants of these northern nations, of whom we have now been speaking, in those periods, called the Middle Ages, or after they had overturned the Roman Empire, and made themselves masters of the greatest part of Europe. In the history of France we have the following sketches of it, after enumerating the various changes which the dress of the men had undergone. 'The dress of the ladies, it may be supposed, says the Author, had likewise its revolutions. They seem, for near nine hundred years, not to have been much taken up with ornaments; nothing

‘ could require less time or nicety than their head-dress, and the disposition of their hair. Every part of their linen was quite plain, but at the same time, extremely fine. Laces were long unknown. Their gowns, on the right side of which was embroidered their husbands’ coat of arms, and on the left that of their own family, were so close, as to shew all the delicacy of their shape, and came up so high, as to cover their whole breast up to the neck. The habit of widows had very much that of our nuns. It was not until Charles the sixth that they began to expose their shoulders.— The gallantry of Charles the Seventh’s court bro’t in the use of bracelets, necklaces, and rings.— Queen Ann de Bretagne despised those trinkets, and Catherine de Medicis made it her whole business to invent new. Caprice, luxury, and vanity, have at length brought them to their present enormity.’

To this account we shall add some remarks on the dress of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes. They considered their hair as one of their greatest personal beauties, and took great care to dress it to the utmost advantage. Young ladies wore it loose, and flowing in ringlets over their shoulders; but after marriage they cut it shorter, tied it up, and covered it with a head-dress, according to the fashion of the times; but to have the hair cut entirely off, was a disgrace of such a nature, that it was even thought a punishment not in adequate to the crime of adultery: so great, in the Middle Ages, was the value set upon the hair by both sexes, that, as a piece of the most peculiar mortification, it was ordered by the canons of the church, that the clergy should keep their hair short, and shave the crown of their head; and that they should not, upon any pretence

whatever, endeavour to keep the part so shaved from the public view. Many of the clergy of these times, finding themselves so peculiarly mortified, and perhaps so easily distinguished from all other people by this particularity, as to be readily detected, when they committed any of the follies or crimes to which human nature is in every situation sometimes liable, endeavoured to persuade mankind, that long hair was criminal, in order to reduce the whole to a similarity with themselves. Amongst these, St. Wulfstan eminently distinguished himself; ‘He rebuked,’ says William of Malmfbury, ‘the wicked of all ranks with great boldness; but was particularly severe upon those who were proud of their long hair. When any of these vain people bowed their heads before him, to receive his blessing; before he gave it he cut a lock from their hair, with a sharp penknife, which he carried about him for that purpose; and commanded them, by way of penance for their sins, to cut all the rest in the same manner: if any of them refused to comply with his command, he reproached them for their effeminacy, and denounced the most dreadful judgments against them.’ Such, however, was the value of the hair in those days, that many rather submitted to his censures, than part with it; and such was the folly of the church, and of this saint in particular, that the most solemn judgments were denounced against multitudes, for no other crime than not making use of penknives and scissars, to cut off an ornament bestowed by nature.

We have already seen, that the French ladies, in the time of Charlemagne, were acquainted with the use of linen; nor were the Anglo-Saxons strangers to it, as appears from several anecdotes of their history; and particularly from this, That the clergy

frequently ordered the most obstinate finners to wear woollen shirts next to their bodies, as an extraordinary penance; it would seem, however, that stockings, and other kinds of covering for the legs, were then but little used; as the clergy, who had the wealth, as well as power of these times in their hands, frequently, with naked legs approached the altar, and celebrated mass; till the year 785, when a canon was made in these terms: ‘Let no minister of the altar presume to approach it, to celebrate mass, with naked legs, lest his filthiness appear, and God be offended.’ Some persons of condition, however, had, in these times, a kind of covering for their legs, which was fastened on with bandages, wrapped about the leg, from the foot to the knee, as appears from the figures of Edward the Confessor, Guido, count of Ponthieu, and some others, in the famous tapestry of Bayeux; one of the most valuable monuments of the times we are considering. But though many of the figures of this tapestry are without stockings; yet neither in this, nor any other of the monuments, which represent the dress of these times, are there any without shoes; though it would seem, that mankind were then so little acquainted with the proper materials for this purpose, that they generally made them of wood. That the common people should not be able to afford any other than wooden shoes, in periods so distant, does not surprise us; but we are rather astonished, when we are told, that in the ninth and tenth centuries, some of the greatest princes in Europe, were only equipped in this manner; sure indications, that the invention of the times had not then discovered any thing that was more proper for the purpose.

The distinguishing the two sexes from each other, by the materials and fashion of their dress, is a cer-

tain sign, that cultivation is arrived at no inconsiderable length: among the ancient Germans there was, in this article, but little difference. Among the Anglo-Saxons, it consisted only of a few particulars; the most material of which was, that the mantles of the women flowed down almost to the ground, whereas those of the men were considerably shorter. Those people, as well as the Danes, seem to have been fond of every kind of ornament, and particularly of gold chains and bracelets: gold chains were worn by officers of high rank as well civil as military, and being given by the sovereigns, these sovereigns were on that account frequently called by the poets, givers of gold chains. Bracelets of gold, or other precious materials, are an ornament now solely appropriated to women. Among the Danes, however, they were indiscriminately the ornaments of either sex; Earl Goodwin presented king Hardicanute with gold bracelets for his arms, and so sacred were ornaments of this kind then esteemed, that they frequently swore by them, and are said to have held an oath of this nature as tremendous and inviolable, as the gods of the pagans did that which was sworn by the Styx.

In the Middle Ages there prevailed among mankind such an universal distrust of each other, owing to the frequency of crimes and the weakness of laws, that there was but little mutual intercourse or social communication among the inhabitants of Europe. Neighbours were frequently as much afraid of each other as the people of different nations are at present when engaged in a war. On this account there were none of those social meetings which have since called great numbers of both sexes together; hence neither sex had then any other motive to induce them to dress than the love of cleanliness, and the

innate desire of finery. When the institution of chivalry started up, it gave a happy turn to this rudeness of manners; it afforded more protection to the women, and consequently enabled them to see more company; it introduced numerous meetings at tilts and tournaments, where the ladies were constituted the judges of valour and rewarders of the valiant, where their charms were supposed to add courage to the hearts, and great strength to the arms of their admirers, and where they were consequently furnished with the very strongest motives to decorate and embellish their persons. But besides tilts tournaments, in the Middle Ages, there arose also in Europe another kind of public meetings, called Fairs, to which both sexes, and all ranks resorted.——While a mutual diffidence and the greatest distrust diffused their baleful influence, and there was hardly any security from rapine and murder, but in the castles and strong holds of the barons, trade and commerce were of consequence in the most languid state; to revive them in some measure, fairs were first instituted, where merchants and traders brought their commodities and exposed them to sale; but a bare sale of goods for which there was but little demand, and still less money to purchase with, did not at first answer the end of drawing many people together; the venders in time, to allure the multitude, besides the exposure of their goods, entertained them with a variety of public shows and diversions; and from that time their fairs became the fashionable places of rendezvous, and were not only another motive for the sex to dress and endeavour to appear to advantage, but also afforded them the materials for that important purpose.

CHAPTER XXII.

The same Subject continued.

WE have already, in treating on the subject of dress, had occasion to give some account of the ancient splendour and magnificence of the Easterns ; let us now take a short view of their present condition, which we shall see is still governed by the same customs, and influenced by the same principles ; for we find them at this day fond of that supine indolence, and of that pageantry and show, which so strongly marked their character from the earliest periods in which history gives an account of them.

Such is the constitution of the two sexes, that the whole of their actions are guided and influenced by each other. The women dress and use every means to appear beautiful and engaging in order to please the men, and the men assume bravery and every masculine accomplishment in their power in order to please and render themselves acceptable to the women. In countries where the sexes are allowed in a free and unrestrained manner to keep company with each other, such mutual efforts on both sides, as they appear to be the effects of that company, pass without exciting any wonder ; but when we consider that in the East women should take the trouble to decorate and adorn themselves, when they are certain that these decorations and ornaments cannot be seen by the other sex, we are astonished. That women, however, do so, is an in-

contestible fact; and so powerful in the female breast is the passion of being admired, that should a woman, as it frequently happens in Asia, have only once in twenty years a chance of being seen and exciting that passion, she would every day during that time, use every possible endeavour to put herself in a condition to do so. The Abbe Lambert, in his account of the manners and customs of the East, observes of the Chinese women, that though they are certain that they can be seen by none but their female domestics, yet they every morning pass several hours in dressing and adorning themselves.

Though the Chinese are perhaps the most regularly economical people on the globe, yet the dress of their women, and particularly the ornaments of their heads, are strong instances of that love of finery and show which has ever prevailed in the East. The head-dress of their ladies commonly consists of several ringlets of hair variously disposed, and every where ornamented with small bunches of gold or silver flowers. Some of them adorn their heads with the figure of a fabulous bird made of gold or silver, according to the quality of the person, which has a grotesque though magnificent appearance. Ladies of the first rank sometimes have several of those birds fastened together so as to form the figure of a crown, the workmanship of which is exquisitely curious.—Young ladies generally wear a kind of crown made of pasteboard, covered with silk, and ornamented with pearls, diamonds, and other jewels; and on the top of the head a bunch of flowers, either natural or artificial, in the middle of which is stuck small wires with sparkling jewels fastened on their points. Such is the attention these women pay to the dress of their heads, though secluded from all communication with the greater part of that sex whom they

would naturally wish to please by it. The dress of their bodies is of all others the most clumsy and inelegant, though often made of the richest materials, and decorated, or rather loaded, with the most costly ornaments; our readers, however, will form a better idea of it, by looking at a Chinese figure, than we could convey by the most laboured description.

In that extensive part of the East Indies formerly subject to the Moguls, though women are, perhaps, more rigidly confined than in China, yet we find the same passion for ornament; their garments are made of the finest silks, richly flowered with gold and silver, and fitted to the shape with a degree of ease and elegance, which shews, that while they have taken nature for their model, their taste in imitating her is far from being contemptible. About the middle they wear a girdle exquisitely embroidered, at the end of which, where it is fastened before, there hangs a globe of gold, or a large pearl; but their greatest attention seems to be paid to their hair, which they dress in a variety of forms, as pyramids, triangles, crescents, or in the figure of some favourite flower or shrub; this is done by gold buckles and wires intermixed with diamonds, and is a work of much time and no less dexterity, though after all, more easily demolished than an head-dress of any other fashion. Besides these tedious and expensive methods, they have a less difficult and more common way of dividing their hair into tresses, which flow with careless ease upon their shoulders, and to which they tie precious stones, and little plates of gold; when thus dressed, to be able to move the head in such a manner as to shew to the best advantage all its splendour and magnificence, is a female art not less difficultly attained, than the proper management of the fan was formerly in Europe, or the taking

snuff with such an air as to display in the most enchanting manner a fine hand, and a finer diamond ring.

It has been a custom time immemorial, for women over the greatest part of the world to pierce their ears, in order to hang to them some trinket, which either gratified their vanity, or was supposed to add some additional lustre to their charms; but this custom of giving torture by a ridiculous incision, and adding a superfluous load to nature, has not been confined to the ears only, the ancient inhabitants of the East had nose as well as ear jewels, and in several parts of the world we find the custom continued to this day. In some parts of the Indies they pierce one nostril, and put into it a gold ring, in which is set the largest and finest diamond they can procure. Our late adventurers in quest of discoveries to the South Sea, met a few instances of men who had something like a feather stuck across through both nostrils; and in New South Wales it was almost common for the men to thrust the bone of some animal, five or six inches long, and nearly as thick as one's finger, through their noses, which so filled the nostrils, that they not only snuffled disagreeably, but were also obliged constantly to keep their mouths open for breath.

To us Europeans, who have hardly left any part of the body except the nose without its particular ornaments and decorations, a nose embellished with jewels, or other trinkets, has an exceedingly grotesque appearance; but this is only the effect of custom, from which the mind generally imbibes the ideas of beauty, elegance, and even of utility and necessity. Thus the Hottentot is persuaded that beauty is greatly augmented by a proper quantity

of greafe and urine. At Smyrna, the women imagine it confifts in a large plump fat body, with prominent breafte ; to obtain all which, they take a variety of medicines, and ufe a variety of fuperftitious ceremonies. The Dutchman finds elegance in a large pair of trunk breeches, the mifer utility in that hoarded ftore which, even though ftarving, he dares not make ufe of, and the man of fafhion thinks his coach almoft as neceffary as the porter does his legs and foulders. That thefe things really happen, we need but reflect on what we feel, on any remarkable change of fafhion ; how uncouth, how unbecoming does the new one commonly appear, till it is familiarized by cuftom, and as foon as that happens ; fhould even the fafhion we thought fo much preferable to it return, we fhould ftand in need of the aid of cuftom to revive our former opinion of it.

But though both fexes in fome parts of the Eaft Indies adorn their nofes, the ladies do not forget their ears alfo, which they generally pierce as in Europe, and load with gold and jewels ; they likewife wear various kinds of necklaces, bracelets, and rings, many of which are of immense value there, and would be ftill more fo among us ; nor are they content with fuch kinds of drefs and ornament as cannot be miftaken for nature, they apply themfelves likewife to fuch as nearly refemble her, and may eafily be taken for her work. They have a variety of paints, which they mix and lay on with fuch dexterity, that it is exceedingly difficult to difcover them ; thefe they commonly apply to their cheeks, and to their eyes ; they likewife paint the extremities of their nails, but in this inftance, departing entirely from nature, they lay on a fine red fo thick that on the flighteft view it appears to be the work of art. But befides the arts of ornament and drefs,

they have here, as in all other parts of the world, various other methods of rendering themselves agreeable, and attracting attention. In Europe, a fine lady sometimes draws the eye upon her by the brilliancy of her snuff-box; in Asia, she frequently accomplishes the same end by a most liberal use of betel, which is a root chewed by all ranks and conditions, as in Europe we do tobacco, and with which the more highly a lady is scented, the more agreeable she becomes to her admirers.

But betel is not the only thing which the ladies depend on to render themselves grateful to the senses, they use for this purpose also a great variety of the most costly essences and perfumes, whose aromatic flavour is brought to the highest perfection by an indulgent climate and vertical sun. Of these they are so exceedingly fond, that the expence of perfumes often exceeds that of clothes and jewels; for they are seldom without some perfumed flower, or fruit, in their hands; when they have none of these, they hold a phial of precious essence, which they, from time to time, sprinkle on their garments, although they are perfumed afresh every time they put them on. They have likewise in the East a particular mode of attracting our sex by the voluptuousness of their figures, by their manners, and by their conversation; all of which are calculated to excite passion and desire. Among the Balliaderes, or dancing girls of the East, we meet with a piece of dress or ornament, of a very particular nature. To prevent their breasts from growing to large, or ill-shaped, they enclose them in cases made of exceeding light wood, which are joined together, and buckled behind; these cases are so smooth and pliable, that they yield to the various attitudes of the body without being flattened, or injuring the delicacy of the

skin; the outside of them is covered with gold leaf, and studded with diamonds. This ornament is well calculated to prevent the laxity induced by a hot climate, and while it thus preserves the beauties of nature, it does not so much conceal them as to hinder the heavings and palpitations of the bosom from being perceived.

Were we to survey all Asia, almost the whole of it would afford the strongest proofs of Eastern splendour and magnificence; but we shall finish what we had to say of it by a relation of the state in which the Portuguese originally found Ormus, when they first sailed into the Gulph of Persia. ‘The streets were covered with mats, and in some places with carpets; and the linen awnings, which were suspended from the tops of the houses, prevented any inconvenience from the heat of the sun. Indian cabinets, ornamented with gilded vases, or china filled with flowering shrubs, or aromatic plants, adorned their apartments; camels, laden with water, were stationed in the public squares; Persian wines, perfumes, and all the delicacies of the table, were furnished in the greatest abundance, and they had the music of the East in its highest perfection. Ormus was crowded with beautiful women from all parts of Asia, who were instructed from their infancy in all the arts of varying and heightening the pleasures of voluptuous love: universal opulence, an extensive commerce, a refined luxury, politeness in the men, and gallantry in the women, united all their attractions to make this city the seat of pleasure.’

Striking as this picture of Asiatic magnificence may appear, in that part of it which relates to female dress and ornament, it may be equalled, if not surpassed,

by the inhabitants of Constantinople; who, being originally Asiatic, brought with them from that country the manners and customs which at present prevail among them. The Turkish dress of Lady Montague, which we shall not describe, as we presume the generality of our fair readers have read her Letters, shews, that the ladies of Constantinople are far from being destitute of taste, and that they know how to join the elegant with the splendid and useful; a circumstance which appears still more plain in the description of the dress of the fair Fatima. But in that which she gives of the habit of the Sultana, who had formerly been the favourite mistress of the Grand Signior, while we are struck with the most costly magnificence, we rather form an idea of a woman loaded with the pageantry of state, than dressed with ease or propriety.

Though we have now mentioned the Turks who inhabit a part of Europe, yet before we proceed to that continent in general, it will be necessary to take a short view of the article of dress in America. Of all the people with which we are as yet acquainted, the inhabitants of this extensive continent seem to be in general the least favoured by nature, and to have made themselves the least assistance by art. In many places, seemingly but a little raised in the faculties of their minds above the beasts of their forests, they have scarcely as yet become acquainted with the use of fire, of houses, or of clothing; and where they are acquainted with them, it is only in so imperfect a manner, that they do not derive from them half the advantages they do in other countries. In such a condition, and situated in regions inhospitably barren, they have few materials for dress, and still less ingenuity to make use of them with propriety; as the appetite for dress, however, is visible among

them, it frequently exerts itself in forming the most grotesque appearances; even the women of Terra del Fuego, though content to be naked, are ambitious to be fine, and for this purpose paint their faces with a variety of colours; a circle of white commonly surrounds the eyes, and the rest of the face is streaked with red and black, so variously disposed, that scarcely any two are to be found alike; and besides this, they wear bracelets of shells and bones upon their wrists and ankles. Either content with these unavailing trifles, or unconscious of the use of any thing else, 'they seemed,' says Lieutenant Cook, 'to have no wish for any thing more than they possessed; nor did any thing which we offered appear acceptable, but beads, as an ornament of superfluity.'

As the Americans are more the children of untutored nature, and consequently have a greater similarity in their dress and ornaments than any other people, we shall only give a short and general description of them, without descending into the differences which distinguish the various tribes and nations from each other. There are few American ornaments in more esteem than garters; these the women make of buffaloe's hair, and adorn them as highly as they can with beads and shells, taking care at the same time to dispose their other garments so as to shew them to the best advantage; besides these, they wear also pieces of deer skin, which they tie to the outsides of their legs, and hang to them tortoise-shells, pebbles, and beads of various colours and sizes. But the legs are not the only parts of the body decorated with this kind of finery; both sexes are frequently seen so loaded with shells from head to foot, as to excite the laughter of an European. This custom of adorning themselves with beads and shells may, however, not be altogether the effect of osten-

tation and love of finery ; beads and shells are their current money, and a person thus adorned, perhaps, carries his whole property about him, the better to secure it from being stolen or plundered.

Before they were supplied with other ornaments from Europe, the Americans of both sexes used such shining stones as were the produce of their own country, tying them to their hair, to their noses and ears, with the fibres of a deer's sinew ; but since our intercourse with them, they have used brass and silver rings for their ears and their fingers ; besides which, they fasten large buttons and knobs of brass to various parts of their attire, so as to make a tinkling when they walk or run. Both sexes esteem these ornaments of the most distinguishing nature, and load themselves with them in the utmost proportion of their rank and ability ; so that our European traders judge of the fortune of an American by the trinkets on the crown of his head, at his ears, wrists, fingers, &c. ; by the quantity of red paint daubed on his face, and by the finery at the collar of his shirt, if he happens to have one, which is far from being always the case.

Although the same attire and the same ornaments are indiscriminately used both by the male and female savages, yet they are not without their sexual distinctions of dress, as well as the inhabitants of civilized nations. The women bore small holes in the lobes of the ears for their ear-rings as in Europe ; the hole which the men make extends almost from one extremity of the external ear to the other. The men are frequently decorated with plumes of feathers and ensigns of war on their heads ; the women, though they sometimes make use of feathers, seldom or never wear them in this manner. The men are

not frequently seen without some of their warlike weapons, or the trophies of their victory fastened to various parts of their bodies; the women scarcely ever appear armed but in cases of necessity, and as rarely wear any of the spoils of the hain.

Some nations of savages, not contented with such ornaments as are loose and easily detached from the body, have contrived to ornament, or rather to disfigure, the body itself by incisions, stainings, and paint. In several of the islands lately discovered in the Great Southern Ocean, a variety of indelible stains are made in different parts of the body, by certain materials which sink into small punctures made in the skin. In Otaheite, this operation is called tattowing, and reckoned so essentially necessary, that none of either sex must be without it, especially the women, who are generally marked in the form of a Z on every part of their toes and fingers. But the part on which these ornaments are lavished with the greatest profusion, is the breech, which, in both sexes is stained with a deep black; and above that, as high as the short rib, are drawn arches which take a lighter shade as they arise, and seem to be distinguishing marks of honour, as they are shown by both sexes with an ostentatious pleasure.

Such is almost the only mode of ornamenting in this formerly unknown part of the globe; as to the dress, it differs little in the two sexes, and consists mostly of loose garments, such as we have already seen were used by almost all nations in their rude and unpolished state. People of condition, however, in Otaheite are distinguished, not as among the ancients, by their great variety of changes of raiment, but by the quantity which they wear at once; some of them having around them several webs of their

cloth, each of eight or ten yards long, and two broad, and throwing a large piece loosely over all, by way of a cloak, or even two of these pieces, if they wish to appear in an extraordinary state. Thus the magnificence of unpolished nations seems always to have exerted itself in quantity only. Abrahám dressed a whole calf, and served it up at an entertainment to two angels. Joseph helped his brother Benjamin to five times as much victuals as his brethren; and the same idea of quantity only, seems to have been regarded in all the feasting of the heroes of Homer, and some other of the ancients. As these distinctions of rank by the quantity of dress only, must be exceedingly troublesome in hot countries, the ladies of Otaheite always uncovered themselves as low as the waist in the evening, throwing off every thing with the same ease and freedom as our ladies would lay aside a glove, cloak, or super-numerary handkerchief.

Singular as this mode of dressing and of undressing may appear to us, that of decorating their heads is hardly less so. They sometimes wear upon them little turbans, but their more common dress, and what they chiefly pride themselves in, is long threads of human hair plaited so as hardly to be thicker than sewing silk, and often a mile or more in length, without a single knot: these they wind round their heads in a manner that shows they are neither void of taste nor elegance, sticking flowers and sprigs of evergreen among them, to give them the greater variety. European satirists are apt to declaim against our ladies for the time they spend under the operation of a French hair-dresser, while even these untutored people cannot be supposed to employ much less in twisting so many yards of rope round their heads, and giving it the necessary decorations.

We left our sketches of the dress of Europe at those periods of time, called the Middle Ages ; and shall now resume them at these ages, which have only a little preceded our own. Were we to endeavour a minute description of the present dress of Europe, the attempt would be like painting the colour of a camelion, or the shape of a Proteus ; both of which would be changed long before we could finish our task. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with a few general observations on the subject.

As women never were slaves, nor had their spirits broken by ill usage and oppression in Europe, as in several other parts of the world, that love of finery, so natural to the sex, must have constantly operated in inducing them to decorate themselves in the best manner that the circumstances of the times could afford, or the fashion of them dictate. But when the revival of arts and sciences began to polish the minds of our ancestors, and to give birth to new ideas ; when trade and commerce began to furnish new materials, for the more elegant modes of decoration, the passions of the sex for dress began also to assume new and unrestrainable powers, and often hurried them to such unjustifiable lengths, deaf to reason, the embellishments which they thought were wanting, in order to make the same brilliant appearance as their neighbours, could not be dispensed with ; though purchased at the price of reputation, and the ruin of fortune. Greece and Rome had often suffered by the same evil ; and had often enacted sumptuary laws to restrain it : such laws now became absolutely necessary in Europe, and several of them were published by Henry Fourth of France ; who saw, with regret, the women of his exhausted kingdom, exhausting themselves still more in the love of finery and emulation of their superiors. He was not, how-

ever, the first potentate who had recourse to this method; several, both before and after him, had published edicts, ascertaining the utmost limits of finery to which every rank and condition of life might proceed; and beyond which they were not to go, without subjecting themselves to a severe penalty.

When we consider, how much greater the value of money was in the times we are speaking of, than at present, it will appear, that women were then much more costly in their dress than at this period, so much declaimed against. In the fifteenth century Laura, the celebrated mistress of the no less celebrated Petrarch, wore on her head a silver coronet, and tied up her hair with knots of jewels. ‘ Her dress, ‘ says the Author of the life of Petrarch, was magnificent; but, in particular, she had silk gloves ‘ brocaded with gold;’ though at this time silk was so scarce, that a pound of it sold for near four pounds sterling, and none but the nobility were allowed to wear it. Women of inferior rank wore crowns of flowers, and otherwise dressed themselves with all the magnificence which circumstances and sumptuary laws would allow.

A most extensive acquisition to the materials of the toilette, as well as to the cleanness and convenience of the men, had now been introduced; this was linen, which had been known in Europe before, only as a curiosity; or at most as a decoration of the most elevated and opulent, but now was coming into general use: cambrics and lawns soon followed, as an improvement; and after these, fine laces were invented, of which women, almost ever since, have so much availed themselves. The art of weaving silk, so as to make garments, had, for some time, been known; but that of making it into ribands,

seems not to have been yet invented ; they have since, however, become so general, that they make an indispensable part of the dress of every female, from the highest to the lowest station. Diamonds had long been known in the East, and some centuries before this, had been introduced into Europe ; but they had not attained the art of polishing them ; and in their natural state, or with the little skill they had in dressing them, they did not show half their lustre.* It was not long after, however, that the art of polishing them, by means of their own dust, and so giving them all their distinguishing brilliancy, was discovered. All these, and some others of less importance, were acquisitions to the stock of female ornament, and rendered the business of the toilette a matter that required more time, as well as more taste, than it had ever done before. From the fifteenth century, to the present time, the variations of female dress and ornament have been more owing to the inconstancy of manners, and the instability of fashion, than to the addition of any new materials. From America, scarcely any thing has been added, but feathers and furs ; the last of which, as one of the best defences from the cold, have been used in all northern countries time immemorial. Though, in milder climates, they are now introduced as an

* They preserve, in the treasury of St. Denis, a clasp of the mantle which the kings of France used to wear on the day of their coronation : this piece is very ancient ; and has what is called, four natural points. There is likewise in the same treasury, a relic almost as ancient, and adorned with eight natural points ; but all these stones are small, black, and no way agreeable to the eye. These, and some others, preserved in the cabinets of the curious, in various parts of Europe, fully demonstrate, that even the diamond, before the art of giving it a proper polish was discovered, was far from being that brilliant, and almost inestimable jewel, which it is at present, when properly improved by the art of the lapidary.

article of luxury ; and a value set upon some of them as imaginary as that of the diamond or the pearl.

Though it is not our intention to give an account of all the changes that have happened in dress, from the fifteenth to the present century ; yet there was one revolution which happened to it, under the protectorship of Oliver Cromwell, that we cannot pass by. Almost every religion, which had been promulgated, previous to that of Christianity, had interwoven, in its very essence, a number of ceremonies, where grandeur and magnificence were ostentatiously displayed. These religions, therefore, instead of discouraging, rather encouraged ornament and finery. But the Author of the Christian system having taught by his example, as well as his doctrine, the utmost plainness and simplicity, it, in time, became fashionable for such of the members of that system, as had more zeal than understanding, to exclaim, in the bitterest terms, against every species of dress that had any other object in view than to cover shame, and defend them from the cold. This rage of turning all things into the most primitive simplicity, seemed rising to the zenith of its glory, about the time that the Protector began to make some figure in England. During his administration, it triumphed over sense, reason, and even decency. Women were then in so much disgrace, that they were denied all kinds of ornament ; and even the beauties bestowed by nature, were considered as criminal disadvantages to the fair possessors, and sufficient motives to induce every Christian to shun their company ; because it was impossible to be in it without sinning.

The pulpits often echoed the following sentiments, that man being conceived in sin, and brought forth

in iniquity, is a slave to the flesh, till regenerated by the spirit; that it was his complaisance for woman that first wrought his debasement, that he ought not therefore to glory in his shame, nor love the fountain of his corruption; that he should not marry on account of love, affection, or the social joys of wedlock, but purely to increase the number of the saints, which he should never occupy himself in doing without prayer and humiliation, that his offspring might thereby avoid the curse. Such being the notions instilled into the people, the most virtuous emotions of nature were considered as arising from original guilt, and beauty avoided as an instrument in the hands of Satan, to seduce the hearts of the faithful; even the women themselves caught with the unnatural contagion, laid aside the ornaments of their sex, and endeavoured to make themselves appear disgusting by humiliation and fasting; nay, some of them were so much afraid of ornaments, that they even considered clothes of any kind as tending to that purpose, and one, full of that idea, came into the church where Cromwell sat, in the condition of our original mother before she plucked the fig-leaf, that she might be, as she said, a sign to the people.

But as the human passions, like springs, fly the more violently in the opposite direction, the more forcibly they have been bent, the restoration was no sooner brought about, than all this public enthusiasm vanished, and elegance of dress and levity of manners soon became more the fashion than slovenliness and puritanism had been before. Pleasure became the universal object, and the pleasure of love took the lead of all others; but beauty unconnected with virtue was the object of this love, it was therefore void of honour or morality, in consequence of which,

female virtue, robbed of its reward, became less inflexible, and a total degeneracy of manners ensued.

In every country where dress is under the direction of taste and judgement, it is so contrived as neither altogether to conceal, nor altogether to discover, the beauties of the female form. This general rule, however, has not been without exceptions; in every country enthusiastic priests, antiquated pruders, and women outrageously virtuous, have muffled themselves like Egyptian mummies, and exclaimed in the bitterness of their hearts against the nakedness of the rest of the world;* while on the other hand, women of less rigid principles, and those abandoned to prostitution, throwing aside all decency, seem to wish that the whole female toilette were reduced to the original fig-leaf: some nations too are less delicate in this respect than others; the Italians and French have ever been remarkably so, while the Spanish have fallen into the opposite extreme. At Venice, the ladies in the beginning of the last century dressed in such light thin stuffs, that not only the shape of the body, but even the colour of the skin might easily be seen through them; and at this day, perhaps owing to the heat of their climate, the dress of their modest women is hardly more decent than that of our common prostitutes. The French ladies are but little less distinguished for their looseness of dress than their neighbours the Italians; almost the only difference is, that more light and fantastic, they have flown with greater rapidity from one fashion to ano-

* In the latter end of the fourteenth century, a monk of the order of St. Augustin, who had acquired great reputation for piety, declaimed so successfully at Pavia, against the ornaments of the times, that many ladies renouncing their finery, appeared in all the simplicity which this supposedly inspired monk dictated to them.

ther: In the fourteenth century, they appeared half naked at public assemblies, and in the public walks dressed so much like the men, that they could hardly be distinguished from them but by the voice and complexion; such have long been the modes of dressing in Italy and France, as to endeavour to show every charm which can with any tolerable degree of decency be displayed. While in Spain, where the spirit of chivalry is hardly yet extinguished, and where the women consequently still retain a little of the romantic dignity which was annexed to it, so far from showing their nakedness, they have hardly as yet condescended even to show their faces to the other sex.

Though the French have now taken the lead of the Italians in all the fantastic fripperies of fashion, it would seem that the Italians were formerly not less noted for it. Petrarch describing their dress in his time says, ‘ who can behold the shoes with pointed toes, so long that they will reach to the knee, head-dresses with wings to them, the hair put into a tail, the foreheads of the men furrowed with those ivory needles, with which the women fastened their hair, and their stomachs squeezed by machines of iron.’ The pointed shoes and machines of iron were more unnatural, and consequently more ridiculous, than any fantastic fashion which has appeared in this fantastic age.

As the ornamental part of dress is evidently meant to heighten the beauties of nature, nothing can be more evident than that it should always coincide with her designs, wherever she is not defective or luxuriant. Such, we presume, are the ideas of true taste; but such, however, have not always been those adopted by the leaders of fashions. Towards

the beginning of the present century, it seems to have been the prevailing opinion, that nature had made the female waist greatly too large; to remedy which the stiffest stays were laced on in the tightest manner, lest the young ladies should become clumsy, or grow crooked. Towards the middle of the century, it began to be discovered, that besides the uneasiness of such a situation, it frequently produced the very effects it was intended to prevent; physicians and philosophers now declaimed against stays, and they were by many laid aside with such abhorrence, that the fashion took quite a different turn. We discovered that our mothers had been all in the wrong, and that nature had not made the female waist nearly so large as it ought to have been; but the ladies supplied this defect so well with clothes that about the years 1759 and 1760 every woman, old and young, had the appearance of being big with child. In ten or twelve years the fashion began to take the opposite direction again, and small waists are now esteemed so great a beauty, that, in endeavouring to procure them, women have outdone all the efforts of their grandmothers in the beginning of the century. Such have been the revolutions of the waist within these fifty years, those of the form in general we pretend not to delineate; we cannot help, however, observing, that were we to copy nature, we should think the gentle tapering and uprightness of a female, contributed not a little to the beauty and elegance of her figure; but as nature, it seems, has erred here also, our ladies endeavour as much as they can, to destroy this kind of elegance, by whale-bone and cork.

The revolutions of the breasts and shoulders have not been less conspicuous than those of the waist: about the beginning of the century, it was highly

indecent to be naked two inches below the neck; about the middle of it, she was dressed in the highest taste who showed the greatest part of her breasts and shoulders; some years afterward, every female of whatever condition was muffled up to the chin; at present that mode is discarded, and the naked breasts and shoulders begin again to appear. As we have already seen, that in all countries women have been particularly solicitous about the ornament and dress of their heads, so in ours these have been an object of so much attention, that the materials employed, and the variations produced by them, are beyond our power to describe; we shall only, therefore, observe in general, that the head-dress of the present times has a near resemblance to that which we have already delineated as used by the ladies of ancient Rome, and consists of so much wool, false hair, pomatum, paste, quilts, combs, pins, curls, ribbons, laces, and other materials, that the head of a modern lady in full dress is, when standing, commonly something more than one-third of the length of her whole figure; we must, however, observe, in justice to the sex, that such preposterous modes of dressing are not peculiar to them alone; the men have not been less rapid in their changes, nor have these changes been proofs of a more elegant taste, or a more solid judgment.

We shall conclude these observations on dress and ornament with one of the most extraordinary instances of legislative superstition that ever contributed to demonstrate human absurdity. We have already seen that long hair was frequently declaimed against from the pulpit, and that it was in the days of Cromwell considered as a subject of disgrace. The gloomy emigrants who fled from England and other parts about that period, to seek in the wilds of America a retreat

where they might worship God according to their consciences, among other whimsical tenets, carried to their new settlements an antipathy against long hair, and when they became strong enough to publish a code of laws, we find the following article as a part of it: "It is a circumstance universally acknowledged, that the custom of wearing long hair, after the manner of immoral persons, and of the savage Indians, can only have been introduced into England, but in sacrilegious contempt of the express command of God, who declares, that it is a shameful practice for any man who has the least care for his soul to wear long hair: as this abomination excites the indignation of all pious persons, we the magistrates, in our zeal for the purity of the faith, do expressly and authentically declare, that we condemn the impious custom of letting the hair grow, a custom which we look upon to be very indecent and dishonest, which horribly disguises men, and is offensive to modest and sober persons, in as much as it corrupts good manners; we, therefore, being justly incensed against this scandalous custom, do desire, advise, and earnestly request all the elders of our continent zealously to shew their aversion from this odious practice, to exert all their power to put a stop to it, and especially to take care that the members of their churches be not infected with it; in order that those persons who, notwithstanding these rigorous prohibitions, and the means of correction that shall be used on this account, shall still persist in this custom, shall have both God and man at the same time against them."

But besides the methods of ornament and dress common almost to all nations, the women of Europe have a variety of others, by which they endeavour

to attract the attention and attach the heart. Among these we may reckon every genteel and polite female accomplishment, such as music drawing, dancing, to all which we may add that correspondent softness of body and of mind, the radiance that sparkles in their eyes, and the melody that flows from their tongue, their unaffected modesty, and the nameless other qualities which so eminently distinguish them from all the women who are educated only to become slaves, and ministers of pleasure, to the tyrant man.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of Courtship.

OF all that variety of passions which so differently agitate the human breast, none work a greater change on the sentiments, none more dulcify and expand the feelings, than love; while anger transforms us into furies, and revenge metamorphoses us into fiends, love awakes the most opposite sensations. While benevolence warms our hearts, and charity stretches out our hands, love, being compounded of all the tender, of all the humane and disinterested virtues, calls forth at once all their soft ideas, and exerts all their good offices.* The declaration of this social and benevolent passion to the object that inspires it, is what we commonly call courtship, and the time of this courtship, notwithstanding the many embarrassments and uneasinesses which attend it, is generally considered as one of the happiest periods of human life, at least so long as it is supported by hope, that pleasant delirium of the soul.

Though the declaration of a passion so virtuous, so benign and gentle, as that which we have now

* The reverend Mr. Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy*, used to say, That he never felt the vibrations of his heart so much in unison with virtue, as when he was in love; and that whenever he did a mean or unworthy action, on examining himself strictly, he found that at that time he was loose from every sentimental attachment to the fair sex.

described, seems to reflect so much honour on the breast in which it is harboured, that neither sex can possibly have any occasion to be ashamed of it ; yet the great Author of Nature, throughout the wide extent of his animated works, appears to have placed the privilege of asking in the male, and that of refusing in the female. Nor, when we except man, has it ever been known among the most savage and ferocious animals, that a rape has been committed on the female, or that she has been attempted by any other methods than such as were gentle and soothing. Man, however, that imperious lord of the creation, has often departed from this rule, and forced a reluctant female to his hated embrace ; and though he has not any where by law, deprived women from resisting such illicit attempts, yet he has gone very near to it ; he has in many nations, from the earliest antiquity, deprived them of the power of refusing such a husband as their fathers or other relations chose for them ; thereby taking from them what the Creator of all things had given them, as a common right with the females of all other animals, and dashing, at once, courtship, and all the delicate feelings and pleasures attending it, out of existence.

Though it is presumable, that the mutual inclination of the sexes to each other, is, in each, nearly equal ; yet, as we constantly see the declaration of that inclination made by the men, let us enquire, whether this is the effect of custom, or of nature ? If what we have just now observed be a general fact, that only the males of all animals first discover their passion to the females, then it will follow, that this is the effect of nature : but if, on the other hand, it be true, as some travellers affirm, that, in several savage countries, the female sex not only declare

their passions with as much ease and freedom as the male, but also frequently endeavour to force the male to their embraces, then it will seem to be the effect of custom. Custom, however, that whimsical and capricious tyrant of the mind, seldom arises out of nothing; and in cases where nature is concerned, frequently has nature for her basis. Allowing then, that it is custom, which in Europe, and many other parts of the world, has placed the right of asking in men, by a long and uninterrupted possession; yet that very custom, in our opinion, may be fairly traced; for nature, it is plain, has made man more bold and intrepid than woman, less susceptible of shame, and devolved upon him almost all the more active scenes of life; it is, therefore, highly probable, that, conscious of these qualities, he at first assumed the right of asking; a right to which custom has at last given him a kind of exclusive privilege.

Taking it for granted then, that the declaration of the sentiment of love, is a privilege of the men, founded on nature, and sanctified by custom, the various modes of making that declaration by them, and of accepting or refusing it by the women, were we able to give a perfect account of it, would make one of the most curious and entertaining parts of this history, and equally furnish matter of speculation for the fine lady and the philosopher. We can, however, exhibit but little of this entertainment, while we treat of the ancient inhabitants of the East; who, strangers to sentiment and delicacy of feeling, bought a bride with the same dispassionate coolness and deliberation, as they would have done an ox or an ass; and even in the review of the other nations, historical information does not enable us to make it so complete as we could wish.

When Abraham sent Eliezer, his servant, to court a bride for his son Isaac, it appears from the story, that sentiment was entirely excluded ; that Abraham had never seen Rebecca, knew not whether her person and temper were agreeable, nor whether the young couple would be pleased with each other ; and that the only motive which determined his choice was, because she was his relation. We do not so much as hear, that Isaac was consulted in the matter ; nor is there even a suspicion, that he might refuse or dislike the wife which his father had selected for him ; circumstances which afford the strongest proof that, in those days, love and regard had little or no existence : they likewise teach us, that the liberty of choice in matrimony was more restricted among the Israelites than the neighbouring nations ; for Laban, the brother of Rebecca, did not seem to chuse for his sister, as Abraham had done for his son ; but asked her, after Eliezer had made his proposal, Whether she would go with the man ? And the manner in which she consented, shews us, that it is to art and refinement we owe the seeming reserve of modern times ; and not to honest and untutored nature, which is never ashamed to speak the sentiments of virtue. “ I will go,” answered she.

From this story, of the manner in which Rebecca was solicited, we learn two things, which throw much light on the courtship of antiquity : the first is, that women were not courted in person by their lovers, but by a proxy ; whom he, or his parents, deputed in his stead : the second, that these proxies did not, as in modern times, endeavour to gain the affections of the ladies they were sent to, by enlarging on the personal properties, and mental qualifications of their lovers ; but by the richness and magni-

ficence of the presents made to them and their relations. Presents have been from the earliest ages, and are to this day the mode of transacting all kinds of business in the East. If you go before a superior, to ask any favour, or even to require what is your due, you must carry a present with you, if you wish to succeed; so that courtship having been anciently negociated in this manner, it is plain, that it was only considered in the same light as any other negotiable business, and not as a matter of sentiment, and of the heart.

It appears, however, that Jacob did not, according to the custom of the times, and after the example of Isaac his father, court a bride by proxy: he went to visit her in person, and their first meeting has in it something very remarkable. Lovers, generally, either are cheerful, or endeavor to assume that appearance; but Jacob drew near, and kissed Rachel, and lift up his voice and wept. How a behaviour of this kind suited the temper of an Israelitish virgin, in the times of primitive simplicity, we know not; but may venture to affirm, that a blubbering lover would make but a ridiculous and unengaging figure in the eyes of a modern lady of the ton. In the courtship, however, or rather purchase of a wife by Jacob, we meet with something like sentiment; for when he found that he was not possessed of money or goods, equal to the price which was probably set upon her, he not only condescended to purchase her by labour and servitude, but even seemed much disappointed, when the tender-eyed Leah was faithlessly imposed upon him, instead of the beautiful Rachel; for whom he again submitted to the same term of servitude he had done before. In the courtship of Sechem also, we find that his choice was strongly determined by love; but then his passion did not,

as one would have thought the most natural, effuse itself into the bosom of the object beloved. He applied to the brethren of Dinah, making them advantageous offers for the possession of the person of their sister, regardless, to all appearance, of her heart. "Ask me never so much dowry, said he, and I will give according as you shall say unto me." But when we consider, that in the times we are delineating, wives were only looked upon as a kind of superior slaves, and not as the social companions of life, and the equal sharers of good and bad fortune; we shall easily perceive, that sentiment in the choice, and reciprocal affection in the bargain, were not so necessary as in our times, when the case is happily reversed.

We laid it down before as a general rule, that the declaration of love was at all times, and in all countries, the peculiar privilege of the men; but as all general rules are liable to some exceptions, there are also a few to this. An Israelitish widow had, by law, a power of claiming in marriage the brother of her deceased husband; in which case, as the privilege of the male was transferred to the female, so likewise that of the female was transferred to the male, he had the power of refusing; the refusal, however, was accompanied with some mortifying circumstances, the woman whom he had thus slighted was to come unto him in the presence of the elders of the city, and to loose the shoe from his foot, and spit in his face. To man, by nature bold and intrepid, and invested with unlimited power of asking, a refusal was of little consequence; but to woman, more timid and modest, and whose power of asking was limited to the brethren of her deceased husband, it was not only an affront, but a real injury, as every one would conclude, that the refusal arose from

some well-grounded cause, and every one would therefore so neglect and despise the woman, that she could have but little chance for a future husband; hence, perhaps, it was thought necessary to fix some public stigma on the dastard who was so ungallant as not to comply with the addresses of a woman. A custom something similar to this obtains at present among the Hurons and Iriquois; when a wife dies, the husband is obliged to marry the sister, or, in her stead, the woman whom the family of his deceased wife shall chuse for him: a widow is also obliged to marry one of the brothers of her deceased husband, if he has died without children, and she is still of an age to have any. Exactly the same thing takes place in the Caroline islands; and there, as well as among the Hurons, the women may demand such brother to marry her, though we are not informed whether they ever exercised that power.

In the Isthmus of Darien, we are told that the right of asking is lodged in, and promiscuously exerted by both sexes; who each, when they feel the passion of love, declare it without the least hesitation or embarrassment; and in the Ukrain, the same thing is said to be carried still farther, and the women more generally to court than the men. When a young woman falls in love with a man, she is not in the least ashamed to go to his father's house, and reveal her passion in the most tender and pathetic manner, and to promise the most submissive obedience, if he will accept of her for a wife. Should the insensible man pretend any excuse, she tells him she is resolved never to go out of the house till he gives his consent, and accordingly taking up her lodging, remains there; if he still obstinately refuses her, his case becomes exceedingly distressing; the church is commonly on her side, and to turn her

out would provoke all her kindred to revenge her honour : so that he has no method left but to betake himself to flight till she is otherwise disposed of.

From the story of Sampson and Delilah, it would seem that the power of asking a female in marriage was even denied to the young men of Israel ; Sampson saw in Timnah a woman of the daughters of the Philistines who was beautiful, and he came and told his father and mother, and said, “ I have seen a woman of the daughters of the Philistines ; now, therefore, get her for me to wife.” Upon his father and mother starting some objections, he did not say, I will make use of the power lodged in my own hands to obtain her, but repeated, “ Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well.” Had it been a custom for their young men in those days to have courted for themselves, it is highly probable, that on their first objection, he would have applied to Delilah in person, instead of applying again to his father and mother after a refusal ; nor was his application to his parents for their advice and consent only, otherwise he would not have said, Get her for me, but allow me to get her for myself.

From the ages we have now been delineating, where the sacred records have afforded us these few hints concerning courtship, we have scarcely any thing more on the subject, till we come to the history of the Greeks. Among the ancient inhabitants of the East, women were so little seen by the men, that they had but few opportunities of raising in their bosoms that composed sentimental feeling which we moderns denominate love, and which cannot properly arise from a transient glance ; when they were accidentally seen, they only raised that animal appetite, which naturally rages so strongly where it is

inflamed by the climate, and whetted by a thousand obstacles, and which, in such circumstances, scarcely has any choice in its object; hence all the obliging offices of gallantry, and the tender sensations of courtship, were in those periods entirely unknown; and as marriage was for the most part an act of bargain and sale, where the woman, in consideration of a price paid for her to her relations, was made a slave to her husband, the men did not study to please, but to command and enjoy. If, in the periods we are now considering, we meet with any thing like sentiment between the two sexes, it was in those illicit amours which depended solely on the parties themselves; in such cases, they sometimes attempted little flights of gallantry, and used mutual endeavours to please, because neither party was a slave to the other, and their connection was the result of their own choice, and not of a bargain made for them without their consent, and perhaps without their knowledge.

Although scarcely any of the brute animals will fight in order to force their females to their embrace, yet all of them, even the most weak and timid, will exert every nerve in order to drive away or destroy a successful rival. Whether this is properly the passion of revenge, or of self-love, is not our province here to enquire; we only observe that it seems to be a principle so universally diffused through animated nature, and so peculiarly ingrafted in man, that the history of all ages bears the most ample testimony of its existence.

During the rude and uncultivated state of society in the early ages, property was hardly to be gained but by fighting to acquire, or kept but by fighting to maintain it; and a woman being considered as

property, it was no uncommon mode of courtship, when there was a plurality of lovers, to fight for the possession of her also. As society began to improve, and fighting became less fashionable, this barbarity began to decline, and, instead of one lover being obliged to fight all his rivals before he could get possession of his mistress, it became the custom for the competitors to give a public testimony of their powers and qualifications in the games and spectacles instituted for that purpose; a custom which, as we shall have occasion to see afterwards, continued long to govern the manners of uncivilized nations; and in compliance with which, it was common for kings and other great people, when they had a daughter to dispose of, to give notice to all such young men of quality, as designed to be competitors, that they might repair to their courts and castles, to shew their skill and dexterity in exercises and in arms; when the prize of beauty was generally awarded to him who had excelled all the others. But as this method was frequently productive of feuds and animosities, which ended not with the lives of those between whom they first began, but were handed down from one generation to another, stained with murder and with blood, treaties of marriage by bargain and sale, agreed to by the relations of the parties, marked the further progress of civil society; many revolving ages saw the social partners of our joys and sorrows trafficked for in this cool and dispassionate manner, and many parts of the world, yet strangers to friendship and to love, still retain the despicable method; and it is only where the joys of liberty and of freedom shed their benign influence, that courtship is an act of inclination and of choice, ending in the joining together the hearts as well as the hands of the contracting parties.

What we have now observed concerning the manner of courtship, was too much the case with the Greeks. In the earlier periods of their history, their love, if we may call it so, was only the animal appetite, impetuous and unrestrained either by cultivation of manners, or precepts of morality; and almost every opportunity which fell in their way prompted them to satisfy that appetite by force, and to revenge the obstruction of it by murder. When they became a more civilized people, they shone much more illustriously in arts and in arms, than in delicacy of sentiment and elegance of manners: hence we shall find, that their method of making love was more directed to compel the fair sex to a compliance with their wishes by charms and philtres, than to win them by the nameless assiduities and good offices of a lover.

As the two sexes in Greece had but little communication with each other, and a lover was seldom favoured with an opportunity of telling his passion to his mistress, he used to discover it by inscribing her name on the walls of his house, on the bark of the trees of a public walk, or the leaves of his books; it was customary for him also to deck the door of the house, where his fair one lived, with garlands and flowers, to make libations of wine before it, and to sprinkle the entrance with the same liquor, in the manner that was practised at the temple of Cupid. Garlands were of great use among the Greeks in love affairs; when a man untied his garland, it was a declaration of his having been subdued by that passion; and when a woman composed a garland, it was a tacit confession of the same thing: and though we are not informed of it, we may presume that both sexes had methods of discovering by

these garlands, not only that they were in love, but the object also upon whom it was directed.

Such were the common methods of discovering the passion of love, the methods of prosecuting it were still more extraordinary, and less reconcilable to civilization and to good principles; when a love affair did not prosper in the hands of a Grecian, he did not endeavour to become more engaging in his manners and person, he did not lavish his fortune in presents, or become more obliging and assiduous in his addresses, but immediately had recourse to incantations and philtres; in composing and dispensing of which, the women of Theffaly were reckoned the most famous, and drove a traffic in them of no inconsiderable advantage. These potions were given by the women to the men, as well as by the men to the women, and were generally so violent in their operation as for some time to deprive the person who took them, of sense, and not uncommonly of life: their composition was a variety of herbs of the most strong and virulent nature, which we shall not mention; but herbs were not the only things they relied on for their purpose, they called the productions of the animal and mineral kingdoms to their assistance; when these failed, they roasted an image of wax before the fire, representing the object of their love, and as this became warm, they flattered themselves that the person represented by it would be proportionally warmed with love. When a lover could obtain any thing belonging to his mistress, he imagined it of singular advantage, and deposited it in the earth beneath the threshold of her door. Besides these, they had a variety of other methods equally ridiculous and unavailing, and of which it would be trifling to give a minute detail; we shall, therefore, just take notice as we go along, that such

of either sex as believed themselves forced into love by the power of philtres and charms, commonly had recourse to the same methods to disengage themselves, and break the power of these enchantments, which they supposed operated involuntarily on their inclinations; and thus the old women of Greece, like the lawyers of modern times, were employed to defeat the schemes and operations of each other, and like them too, it is presumable, laughed in their sleeves, while they hugged the gains that arose from vulgar credulity.

In this manner were the affairs of love and gallantry carried on among the Greeks, but we have great reason to apprehend that this was the manner in which unlawful amours only were conducted, for the Greek women, as we have already seen, had not a power of refusing such matches as were provided for them by their fathers and guardians; and consequently a lover who could secure these on his side, was always sure of obtaining the person of his mistress; and from the complexion of the times, we have little reason to suppose that he was solicitous about her esteem and affection. This being the case, courtship between the parties themselves could have little existence; and the methods we have now described, with a variety of others too tedious to mention, must have been those by which they courted the unwary female to her shame and disgrace, and not those by which they solicited the chaste bride to their marriage-bed.

The Romans, who borrowed most of their customs from the Greeks, also followed them in that of endeavouring to conciliate love by the power of philtres and of charms; a fact of which we have not the least room to doubt, as there are in Virgil and

some other of the Latin poets so many instances that prove it. But it depends not altogether on the testimony of the poets; Plutarch tells us, that Lucullus, a Roman general, lost his senses, by a love potion;* and Caius Caligula, according to Suetonius, was thrown into a fit of madness by one which was given him by his wife Cæsonia; Lucretius too, according to some authors, fell a sacrifice to the same folly. The Romans, like the Greeks, made use of these methods mostly in their affairs of gallantry and unlawful love; but in what manner they addressed themselves to a lady they intended to marry has not been handed down to us, and the reason as we suppose is, that little or no courtship was practised among them; women had no disposing power of themselves, to what purpose was it then to apply to them for their consent? They were under perpetual guardianship, and the guardian having the sole power of disposing of them, it was only necessary to apply to him. In the Roman authors, we frequently read of a father, a brother, or a guardian, giving his daughter, his sister, or his ward, in marriage, but we do not recollect one single instance of being told that the intended bridegroom applied to the lady for her consent; a circumstance the more extraordinary, as women in the decline of the Roman empire had arisen to a dignity, and even to a freedom, hardly equalled in modern times.

* As the notion of love potions and powders is at this day not altogether eradicated, we take this opportunity of assuring our readers, that there is no potion, powder, or medicine known to mankind, that has any specific power of raising or determining the affections to any certain object, and that all pretensions to such are not only vain and illusive, but illegal, and to the last degree dangerous.

Though wives were not purchased among the Celtes, Gauls, Germans, and neighbouring nations of the North as they are in the East, they were nevertheless a kind of slaves to their husbands; but this slavery was become so familiar by custom, that the women neither lost their dignity by submitting, nor the men their regard by subjecting them to it; and as they often received portions with their wives, and had so much veneration for the sex in general, we shall be the less surpris'd to find, that in courtship they behaved with a spirit of gallantry, and shew'd a degree of sentiment to which the Greeks and Romans, who called them Barbarians, never arriv'd; not contented with getting possession of the person of his mistress, a northern lover was never satisfied without the sincere affection of her heart, nor was his mistress ever to be gained but by such methods as plainly indicated to her, the tenderest attachment from the most respectable man.

The ancient Scandinavian women were naturally chaste, proud, and scarcely less emulous of glory than the men, being constantly taught to despise such as spent their youth in peaceful obscurity, they were not to be courted but by the most assiduous attendance, seconded by such warlike achievements as the custom of the country had rendered necessary to make a man deserving of his mistress. On these accounts, we frequently find a lover accosting the object of his passion by a minute and circumstantial detail of all his exploits, and all his accomplishments. King Regner Lodbrog, in a beautiful ode composed by himself, in memory of the deeds of his former days, gives a strong proof of this.

“ We fought with swords, says he, that day, wherein I saw ten thousand of my foes rolling in the

dust near a promontary of England. A dew of blood distilled from our swords, the arrows which flew in search of the helmets, bellowed through the air. The pleasure of that day, was equal to that of clasping a fair virgin in my arms.

“ We fought with swords: a young man should march early to the conflict of arms, man should attack man, or bravely resist him; in this bath always consisted the nobility of the warrior. He who aspires to the love of his mistress, ought to be dauntless in the clash of swords.

“ We fought with swords in fifty and one battles under my floating banners. From my early youth I have learned to dye the steel of my lance with blood, but it is time to cease. Odin hath sent his goddesses to conduct me to his palace, I am going to be placed on the highest seat, there to quaff goblets of beer with the gods; the hours of my life are rolled away.”

Such, and many of the same kind, are the exploits sung by king Regner. In another ode of Harold the valiant, of a later date, we find an enumeration of his exploits and accomplishments joined together, in order to give his mistress a favourable idea of him, but from the chorus of his song we learn that he did not succeed.

“ My ships have made the tour of Sicily; there were we all magnificent and splendid: my brown vessel, full of mariners, rapidly rowed to the utmost of my wishes; wholly taken up with war, I thought my course would never slacken, and yet a Russian maiden scorns me.

“ In my youth, I fought with the people of Drontheim, their troops exceeded ours in number. It was a terrible conflict, I left their young king dead on the field, and yet a Russian maiden scorns me.

“ One day, we were but sixteen in a vessel, a storm arose and swelled the sea, it filled the loaded ship, but we diligently cleared it out ; thence I formed hopes of the happiest success, and yet a Russian maiden scorns me.

“ I know how to perform eight exercises, I fight valiantly, I sit firmly on horseback, I am innured to swimming, I know how to run along the skates, I dart the lance, and am skilful at the oar, and yet a Russian maiden scorns me.

“ Can she deny, that young and lovely maiden, that on that day, when posted near a city in the southern land, I joined battle ; that then I valiantly handled my arms, and left behind me lasting monuments of my exploits, and yet a Russian maiden scorns me.

“ I was born in the high country of Norway, where the inhabitants handle their bows so well ; but I preferred guiding my ships, the dread of peasants, among the rocks of the ocean, and far from the habitations of men. I have run through all the seas with my vessels, and yet a Russian maiden scorns me.”

Besides these methods of courting, or aspiring to the good graces of the fair, by arms and by arts, the ancient Northerns had several others ; and among these it would seem charms and incantations were reckoned not the least powerful. Odin, who first

taught them their mythology, and whom they afterwards worshipped as their supreme deity, says, in one of his discourses :

“ If I aspire to the love and the favour of the chafteft virgin, I can bend the mind of the fnowy armed maiden, and make her yield wholly to my defires.

“ I know a fecret which I will never lofe, it is to render myfelf always beloved of my miftrefs.

“ But I know one which I will never impart to any female except my own fifter, or to her whom I hold in my arms. Whatever is known only to one’s felf is always of great value.”

In the Hava-Maal, or fublime difcourfes of Odin, we have fome fketches of directions how to proceed in courtfhip, fo as to be fuccefsful without the affiftance of any charm or fecret :

“ He who would make himfelf beloved of a maiden, muft entertain her with fine difcourfes, and offer her engaging prefents; he muft alfo incefsantly praife her beauty. It requires good fenfe to be a fkilful lover—If you would bend your miftrefs to your paffion, you muft only go by night to fee her; when a thing is known to a third perfon, it never fucceeds.”

The young women of the nations we are confidering, not relying upon what fame had reported concerning the acquifitions of their lovers, frequently defired to be themfelves the witneffes of them, and the young men were not lefs eager in feizing every opportunity to gratify their defires. This is abun-

dantly proved by an anecdote in the history of Charles and Grymer, two kings of Sweden :

“Grymer, a youth early distinguished in arms, who well knew how to dye his sword in the blood of his enemies, to run over the craggy mountains, to wrestle, to play at chess, trace the motions of the stars, and throw far from him heavy weights, frequently shewed his skill in the chamber of the damsels, before the king’s lovely daughter ; desirous of acquiring her regard, he displayed his dexterity in handling his weapons, and the knowledge he had attained in the sciences he had learned ; at length he ventured to make this demand : Wilt thou, O fair princess, if I may obtain the king’s consent, accept of me for a husband ? To which she prudently replied, I must not make that choice myself, but go thou and offer the same proposal to my father.”

The sequel of the story informs us, that Grymer accordingly made his proposal to the king, who answered him in a rage, that though he had learned indeed to handle his arms, yet as he had never gained a signal victory, nor given a banquet to the beasts of the field, he had no pretensions to his daughter, and concluded by pointing out to him, in a neighbouring kingdom, a hero renowned in arms, whom, if he could conquer, the princess should be given him : that on waiting on the princess to tell her what had passed, she was greatly agitated, and felt in the most sensible manner for the safety of her lover, whom she was afraid her father had devoted to death for his presumption ; that she provided him with a suit of impenetrable armour and a trusty sword, with which he went, and having slain his adversary, and the most part of his warriors, returned victorious, and received her as the reward of his

valour. Singular as this method of obtaining a fair lady by a price paid in blood may appear, it was not peculiar to the northerns : we have already taken notice of the price which David paid for the daughter of Saul, and shall add, that among the Saccæ, a people of ancient Scythia, a custom something of this kind, but still more extraordinary, obtained ; every young man who made his addressees to a lady, was obliged to engage her in single combat ; if he vanquished, he led her off in triumph, and became her husband and sovereign ; if he was conquered, she led him off in the same manner, and made him her husband and her slave.

From the preceding observations, it appears, that the ancient northerns placed their principal felicity in the enjoyments of courtship and of love, as they compared even the pleasures of vanquishing their enemies to this last, as to the highest possible standard of pleasure. It likewise appears, that, instigated by sentiment, and actuated by freedom, they made application first to the object of their wishes, to know whether they would be agreeable to her, before they would proceed to solicit the consent of parents or relations ; sentiments which shone with no small degree of lustre, even through that scene of horrid barbarity in which they were constantly immersed.

As nothing could be more humble and complaisant than the men when they presented their addressees to the fair, so nothing could be more haughty or determined than the answers and behaviour of such ladies as did not approve of their suitors. Gida, the daughter of a rich Norwegian lord, when courted by Harald Harfagre, sternly answered, that if he aspired to the merit of her love, he must signalize

himself by exploits of a more extraordinary nature than any he had yet performed ; nor was such a reception peculiar to her ; it was the custom of the times ; and the manners, in a great measure, contributed to render such a custom necessary ; for besides the personal safety of a wife, depending so much on the prowess of the man she married, valour was the only road to riches and to honours, and even subsistence frequently depended in a great measure upon the spoils taken in the excursions of war. But their haughty behaviour was not entirely confined to words ; it is supposed, though we do not venture to affirm it, that when a suitor had gone through the exercise of his arms before them, and when displeased with his performance, they wanted to put a negative upon his wishes, instead of a verbal reply, they sometimes arose hastily, snatched the arms from his hands, and shewed him that they could handle them with more dexterity than himself ; a proof which not only mortified all his vanity, but imposed eternal silence on his pretensions to love.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The same Subject continued.

FROM this account of the courtship of the inhabitants of the North, it is easy to see, that they were, in this respect at least, far advanced beyond the savage barbarity of many nations now existing; among whom marriages are commonly contracted with little previous attachment, and as little regard to the mutual inclination of the parties for each other. Savages, in general, not being determined to marry for any attachment to a particular woman; but because they find that state necessary to their comfortable subsistence, and conformable to the fashion of their country, are not solicitous who shall become their wives; and, therefore, commonly leave the choice of them to their parents and relations; a method which excludes all the joys, and all the pains of courtship, from their system. But as this is not universally the case in savage life, we shall give a short account of the manner in which they address the females, whom they have selected as the objects of their love.

The method of asking in courtship, as well as that of refusing, among some of the tribes of American Indians, is the most simple that can possibly be devised. When the lover goes to visit his mistress, he only begs leave to enter her hut by signs; which having obtained, he goes in, and sits down by her in the most respectful silence; if she suffers him to remain there without interruption, her doing so is

consenting to his suit; and they go to bed together without further ceremony: but if the lover has any thing given him to eat or drink, it is a refusal; though the woman is obliged to sit by him till he has finished his repast; after which he retires in silence. In Canada, courtship is a stranger to that coy reserve, and seeming secrecy, which politeness has introduced among the inhabitants of civilized nations. When a man and woman meet, though they never saw each other before, if he is captivated with her charms, he declares his passion in the politest manner; and she, with the same honest simplicity, answers, Yes, or No, without further deliberation. It was formerly a custom, among the Brazilians, that as soon as a man had slain an enemy, he had a right to court a bride; but that custom is now abolished; and the suitor is now obliged to ask the consent of the girl's parents; which he no sooner obtains, than he hastens to the bride, and forces her to his embrace. In Formosa, they differ so much from the simplicity of the Canadians, that it would be reckoned the greatest indecency in the man to declare, or the woman to hear, a declaration of the passion of love. The lover is therefore, obliged to depute his mother, sister, or some female relation; and from any of them the soft tale may be heard, without offence to delicacy or to custom.

Such are the customs which, among some savage nations, regulate the affairs of courtship; customs which shew, that, even in the most rude and uncultivated state, men are hardly more uniform in their ideas and actions, than when polished by civilization and society. The lower class of the people, who inhabit Massachusetts Bay, and have borrowed their ideas, perhaps, from the Indians, or brought them from some of those countries from which they emi-

grated, have a remarkable method of Courtship. When a man falls in love with a woman, he first proposes his conditions to her parents, without whose consent no marriage in the colony can take place; if they approve of him, he repairs to their house in the evening, in order to make his court to the young woman. At their usual hour, the old people, and the rest of the family, go to bed, leaving the lovers together also. Some time after, they go to bed together also; but without stripping themselves naked, to avoid scandal: if they are pleased with each other, the bans are published, and they are married without delay; if not, they part, and perhaps never see one another more; unless, as it sometimes happens, the woman should be with child; when the man is obliged to marry her, under pain of excommunication. This has a great resemblance to a custom used in some places by the savages, where a lover goes in the night to the hut of his mistress, steals silently in, lights a match at the fire, and cautiously approaches her bed, holding the match before him; if she blows it out, it is a sign of her approbation; and shews that she wishes the affair to be transacted in darkness and secrecy: he takes the hint, and immediately lays himself down by her side. If she suffers the light to remain burning, it is a denial, and he is obliged to retire.

Before we take leave of the European colonies in America, we shall mention another singularity in the behaviour of lovers in Pennsylvania; which shews that the women have not even that degree of delicacy, which we have just now seen them possessed of in savage life: when two Pennsylvanian lovers meet with any remarkable opposition from their friends, they go off together on horseback; the lady riding before, and the man behind her. In this

situation, they present themselves before a magistrate ; to whom she declares, that she has run away with her lover, and has brought him there to be married : so solemn an avowal, the magistrate is not at liberty to reject, and they are married accordingly.

It has long been a common observation among mankind, that love is the most fruitful source of invention ; and that in this case the imagination of a woman is still more fruitful of invention and expedient than that of a man ; agreeably to this, we are told, that the women of the island of Amboyna, being closely watched on all occasions, and destitute of the art of writing ; by which, in other places, the sentiments are conveyed at any distance, have methods of making known their inclinations to their lovers, and of fixing assignations with them, by means of nose-gays, and plates of fruit so disposed, as to convey their sentiments in the most explicit manner : by these means their courtship is generally carried on, and by altering the disposition of symbols made use of, they contrive to signify their refusal, with the same explicitness as their approbation. In some of the neighbouring islands, when a young man has fixed his affection, like the Italians, he goes from time to time to her door, and plays upon some musical instrument ; if she gives consent, she comes out to him, and they settle the affair of matrimony between them : if, after a certain number of these kind of visits, she does not appear, it is a denial ; and the disappointed lover is obliged to desist.

We shall see afterward, when we come to treat of the matrimonial compact, that, in some places, the ceremony of marriage consists in tying the garments of the young couple together, as an emblem

of that union which ought to bind their affections and interests. This ceremony has afforded a hint for lovers to explain their passion to their mistresses, in the most intelligible manner, without the help of speech, or the possibility of offending the nicest delicacy. A lover in these parts, who is too modest to declare himself, seizes the first opportunity he can find, of sitting down by his mistress, and tying his garment to hers, in the manner that is practised in the ceremony of marriage: if she permits him to finish the knot, without any interruption, and does not soon after cut or loose it, she thereby gives her consent; if she looses it, he may tye it again on some other occasion, when she may prove more propitious; but if she cuts it, his hopes are blasted forever.

Both these last mentioned customs are peculiar to the East; and they are almost the only ones we can find in these extensive regions, concerning courtship, that are worth relating; for where the two sexes are denied all communication with each other, it is impossible there should be any courtship; where the venal bride is bought from her still more venal parents to be the slave not the companion, of her husband; neither are they possessed of feelings necessary for the delicately sentimental prelude of the social state of wedlock.

It is observable in courtship, that wherever women are free and independent, they are addressed by the men in the manner that is supposed will be most pleasing to them; where they are not free, the only care of the men is to get possession of their persons. The Author of Nature having made the female form beautiful and engaging, man is frequently captivated with it at first sight: but as man

is a less comely and less attractive animal, he does not so commonly insinuate himself into the heart of a woman at his first appearance, but must do it by a long train of little assiduities, and attention to promote her happiness and pleasure. According to this observation, we find the courtship of almost every people, in whatever degree they stand in the scale of civil society, constantly tendering to the fair sex those objects and amusements in which they take the greatest delight. In many of the politer countries of Europe, and elsewhere, these are precedence, titles, pomp, and pageantry. In America, they are beads, shells, and enormous quantities of red paint; and among the frigid Laplanders, brandy supplies the place of all. A Lapland lover is said to pay little regard to beauty, virtue, or accomplishments, but only to the quantity of rein-deer possessed by the object of his choice; and she and her relations pay as little regard to any thing concerning him, but the quantity of brandy with which he treats them during the courtship.

The delicacy of a Lapland lady, which is not in the least hurt by being drunk as often as she can procure liquour, would be wounded in the most sensible manner, should she deign at first to listen to the declaration of a lover; he is therefore obliged to employ a match-maker to speak for him; and this match-maker must never go empty-handed; and of all other presents, that which most infallibly secures him a favourable reception, is brandy. Having, by the eloquence of this, gained leave to bring the lover along with him, and being, together with the lover's father or other nearest male relation, arrived at the house where the lady resides, the father and match-maker are invited to walk in, but the lover must wait patiently at the door till further solicited. The

parties, in the mean time, open their suit to the other ladies of the family, not forgetting to employ in their favour their irresistible advocate brandy, a liberal distribution of which is reckoned the strongest proof of the lover's affection. When they have all been warmed by the lover's bounty, he is brought into the house, pays his compliments to the family, and is desired to partake of their cheer, though at this interview seldom indulged with a sight of his mistress; but if he is, he salutes her, and offers her presents of rein-deer skins, tongues, &c.; all which, while surrounded with her friends, she pretends to refuse; but, at the same time giving her lover a signal to go out, she soon steals after him, and is no more that modest creature she affected to appear in company. The lover now solicits for the completion of his wishes: if she is silent, it is construed into consent; but if she throws his presents on the ground with disdain, the match is broke off for ever.

It is generally observed, that women enter into matrimony with more willingness, and less anxious care and solicitude, than men, for which many reasons naturally suggest themselves to the intelligent reader. The women of Greenland are, however, in many cases, an exception to this general rule. A Greenlander, having fixed his affection, acquaints his parents with it; they acquaint the parents of the girl; upon which two female negociators are sent to her, who, lest they should shock her delicacy, do not enter directly on the subject of their embassy, but launch out in praises of the lover they mean to recommend, of his house, of his furniture, and whatever else belongs to him, but dwell most particularly on his dexterity in catching of seals. She, pretended to be affronted, runs away, tearing the ringlets of her hair as she retires; after which the

two females, having obtained a tacit consent from her parents, search for her, and, on discovering her lurking-place, drag her by force to the house of her lover, and there leave her. For some days she sits with dishevelled hair, silent and dejected, refusing every kind of sustenance, and at last, if kind intreaties cannot prevail upon her, is compelled by force, and even by blows, to complete the marriage with her husband. It sometimes happens, that when the female match-makers arrive to propose a lover to a Greenland young woman, she either faints, or escapes to the uninhabited mountains, where she remains till she is discovered and carried back by her relations, or is forced to return by hunger and cold; in both which cases, she previously cuts off her hair; a most infallible indication, that she is determined never to marry.

This peculiar disposition of the Greenland women is not nature; her dictates are every where nearly the same; it is the horror which arises at the slavish and dependent state of the wives of that country, and the still more abject and deserted state of its widows; for the wives, besides being obliged to do every servile office, are frequently subjected to the merciless correction of their husbands. The widows, when they have no longer a husband to hunt and fish for them, are destitute of every resource, and frequently perish of hunger: hence matrimony, which in most places makes the condition of women more independent and comfortable, among them renders it truly wretched; and hence they enter into it with so much reluctance and regret.

Women were formerly treated little better in some parts of Europe. In Spain, they had scarcely any power in bestowing themselves on, or refusing

the offers of, a lover. As the empire of common sense began to extend itself, they began to claim a privilege, at least of being consulted in the choice of the partners of their lives. Many fathers and guardians, however, hurt by this female innovation, and puffed up with Spanish pride, still insisted on forcing their daughters to marry according to their pleasure, by means of duennas, locks, hunger, and even sometimes poison and daggers: but as nature will revolt against every species of oppression and injustice, the ladies have for some time begun to triumph; the authority of fathers and guardians begins to decline, and lovers find themselves obliged to apply to the affections of the fair, as well as to the pride and avarice of her relations. As women of fashion are, however, seldom allowed to go abroad, and never to receive male visitors at home, unless with the consent of their relations, or by the contrivance of a duenna, this application is commonly made in a manner almost peculiar to the Spaniards themselves: the gallant sets himself to compose some love sonnets, as expressive as he can, not only of the situation of his heart, but of every particular circumstance between him and the lady, not forgetting to lard them every here and there with the most extravagant encomiums on her beauty, and her merit: these he sings in the night below her window, accompanied with his lute, or sometimes with a whole band of music. The more piercingly cold the air, the more the lady's heart is supposed to be thawed with the patient sufferance of her lover, who, from night to night, frequently continues this exercise for many hours, heaving the deepest sighs, and casting the most piteous looks toward the window; at which, if his goddess at last deigns to appear, and drop him a curtesy, he is superlatively paid for all his watching; but if she blesses him with a smile, he is ready to run distracted.

In most of the countries we have hitherto mentioned, love, if we may call it so, is carried on without sentiment or feeling : in Spain it is quite the reverse ; there, it flows in an uninterrupted course of intellectual sensations, expressing almost in an infinite variety of different ways. A Spanish lover hardly thinks, speaks, or even dreams, of any thing but his mistress ; when he speaks to her, it is with the utmost respect and deference ; when he speaks of her, it is in the most hyperbolically romantic style ; and when he approaches her, you would think that he was approaching a divinity. But all this deference to her godship, all this patient sufferance under her window, is not enough ; and as none but the brave can deserve the fair, he is ready at all times, not only to fight all her enemies, and his own rivals, but to seek every opportunity of signaling his courage, that he may shew himself able to protect her. Among all these opportunities, none are so eagerly courted as the fighting with bulls ; a horrid amusement, for which Spain is remarkable, where the ladies sit as spectators, while the cavaliers encounter these furious animals, previously exasperated, and turned loose upon them, and where, according to the sarcastic phrase of Butler,

“ ——— he obtains the noblest spouse,

“ Who widows’ greatest herds of cows.”

Some of the human passions are so nearly allied to each other, that the transition from this to that, is hardly perceptible to the mind, and seems as easy and natural as it is to step from the threshold into the house. Of this kind is friendship with woman, which has been called sister to love ; and we may add, that to pity a woman, who is tolerably handsome and deserving, and at the same time to guard

against every softer sensation, is absolutely impossible. The Spaniards, transposing the persons acted upon by this emotion, and finding that the same causes must produce the same effects on the tender and compassionate natures of women, endeavour, instead of attaching them by pleasure, as in other countries, to secure them by exciting their pity and compassion, not only through every part of the courtship we have now related, but still more forcibly in a custom, which they practised some time ago at Madrid, and in other parts of Spain; when a company of people, who called themselves discipliants or whippers, partly instigated by superstition, and partly by love, paraded the streets every Good Friday, attended by all the religious orders, several of the courts of judicature, all the companies of trades, and sometimes the king and all his court.—The whippers were arrayed in long caps in the form of a sugar loaf, with white gloves, and shoes of the same colour; a waistcoat, the sleeves of which were tied with ribbons of such colours as they thought most agreeable to the fancy of the ladies they adored; and in their hands were whips made of small cords, to the ends of which were cemented little bits of wax stuck with pieces of broken glass; with these they whipped themselves as they went along, and he who shewed the least mercy to his carcase, was sure of the greatest pity from his dulcinea. When they happened to meet a handsome woman in the street, some one of them took care to whip himself so as to make his blood spurt upon her; an honour for which she never failed humbly to thank him. When any of them came opposite to the window of his mistress, he began to lay upon himself with redoubled fury, while she, from her balcony, looked complacently on the horrid scene, and knowing it was acted in honour of her charms, thought herself

greatly obliged to her lover, and seldom failed to reward him accordingly.

Not less singular, and much of the same nature, is a method of courtship which Lady Montague saw at a procession in Constantinople, when the Grand Signior was going out to take the command of an army.

“The rear, says she, was closed by the volunteers, who came to beg the honour of dying in his service; they were all naked to the middle, some had their arms pierced through, with arrows left sticking in them, others had them sticking in their heads, the blood trickling down their faces: some flashed their arms with sharp knives, making the blood spring out on the bye-standers; and this is looked on as an expression of their zeal for glory. And I am told, that some make use of it to advance their love; and when they came near the window where their mistress stands, all the women being veiled to see this spectacle, they stick another arrow for her sake, who gives some sign of approbation and encouragement to this kind of gallantry.”

We cannot help condemning customs so barbarous in the severest terms; but while we condemn them, we have the strongest hopes that they no longer exist; while in Scotland, one of a somewhat similar nature, scarcely less ridiculous, or less dangerous, is not yet obliterated. At a concert annually held on St. Cecilia's day in Edinburgh, most of the celebrated beauties are assembled; when the concert is ended, their adorers retire to a tavern, when he that drinks the largest quantity to the health of his mistress, according to the phrase they make use of, saves her, and dubs her a public toast for the

ensuing year ; while the hapless fair, who is beloved by one of a more irritable system and less capacious stomach, according to the same cant, is damned, and degraded by the bucks from being ranked among the number of beauties. In tracing general principles, one often meets with many discordant and contradictory facts ; it is a general law of nature, that when the male makes love to the female, he endeavours to put himself into the most agreeable postures and attitudes, and to gain her affection by shewing, if we may be allowed the expression, his best side, and most agreeable accomplishments : but the instances we have now related are exceptions to this general law ; they tend, however, to establish this truth, that the actions of men are more frequently directed by whim and caprice, than by any fixed and permanent principles.

Among the various methods which we have in this inquiry seen practised by the men, of introducing themselves into the good graces of the fair, fighting has not been the least common ; and several tolerably good reasons may be assigned why this should so successfully accomplish its purpose. Nothing, however, seems less natural than to endeavour to engage the female heart by unavailing cruelty to one's own flesh : this has in itself no merit, nor distinguishes the man for any thing but a wrong head, and an insensibility of nerves. Whoever, therefore, gets drunk, or commits any outrage upon himself for the sake of his mistress, should be trusted by the women with caution, as the same causes which prompted him to this folly, may prompt him to others in which his own person is less likely to suffer.

Before we take our leave of the Spaniards, we must do them the justice to say, that though their ideas of the ladies, and their manner of addressing them, is strongly tinged with the wild and the romantic, it is at the same time directed by an honour and fidelity scarcely to be equalled by any other people. In Italy, the manner of courtship pretty nearly resembles that of Spain; in one circumstance, however, this people seem particular; they protract the time of courtship for many months, and even sometimes for years, well knowing, that this period, with all the little ills attending it, is one of the sweetest of human life; while it lasts, the lady expects to see her lover at least once a day.

To the difference of the climate of one country from another, philosophers have generally attributed the different disposition of the inhabitants. But France and Spain are kingdoms bordering on each other, and yet nothing can be more dissimilar than a Frenchman and a Spaniard, especially in affairs of love. A French lover, with the word sentiment perpetually in his mouth, seems by every action, to have excluded it from his heart. He places his whole confidence in his exterior air and appearance. He dresses for his mistress, dances for her, flutters constantly about her, helps her to lay on her rouge; and place her patches; attends her round the whole circle of amusements, chatters to her perpetually, and by making her acquainted with his own consequence and qualifications, every now and then drops a hint of the honour he confers upon her; whatever be his station, every thing gaudy and glittering within the sphere of it, is called in to his assistance, particularly splendid carriages and taudry liveries; but if by the help of all these, he cannot make an impression on the fair one's heart, it costs him nothing

at last but a few shrugs of his shoulders, and two or three silly exclamations; and, as it is impossible for a Frenchman to live without an amour, he immediately betakes himself to another.

Among people of fashion in France, courtship begins to be totally annihilated, and marriages made by parents and guardians are become so common, that a bride and bridegroom not unfrequently meet together for the second time on the day of their marriage. In a country where complaisance and form seem so indispensable, it may appear extraordinary, that a few weeks at least should not be allowed a young couple to gain the affections of each other, and to enable them to judge whether their tempers were formed for their mutual happiness; but this delay is commonly thought unnecessary by the prudent parents, whose views extend no farther than interest and convenience. In many countries, to be married in this manner would be reckoned the greatest of misfortunes; in France, it is little regarded, as in the fashionable world few people are greater strangers to, or more indifferent about, each other, than husband and wife; and any appearance of fondness between them, or their being seen frequently together, would infallibly make them forfeit the reputation of the ton, and be laughed at by all polite company. On this account, nothing is more common than to be acquainted with a lady, without knowing her husband, or visiting the husband, without ever seeing his wife.

An historian, who has read how the French have been, time immemorial, governed by their women, and a traveller, who has seen the attention that every one pays to them, will be apt to reckon all we have now said as falsehood and misrepresentation:

but to the first, we would recommend to consider, that the women, who have commonly governed France, have been the mistresses of their kings or other great men, who, trained up in every alluring mode of their profession, have become artful beyond conception, in insinuating themselves by all the avenues that lead to the male heart; the second, we would wish to consider, that this constant attention is more the effect of fashion and custom than of sentiment or regard; and that even the frequent duels which in France are fought on account of women, are not a proof of the superior love or esteem of the men for that sex, nor undertaken to defend their virtue or reputation; they are only a mode of compliance with what is falsely called politeness, and of supporting what is falsely esteemed honour.

Formerly, while the manners introduced by the spirit of chivalry were not quite evaporated among the French, before the too great progress of politeness had destroyed the virtues of honest simplicity, and tongue had learned by rote, to make every day a thousand protestations of friendship, to which the heart was a stranger; the behaviour of this people, though mixed with romantic extravagance, was nevertheless replete with feeling and with sentiment. During the regency of Anne of Austria, fighting and religion were the most successful ways by which a lover could recommend himself to his mistress; the bombastic verses of the Duke of Rochefoucault shew what a lover then promised with his sword;* and the number of women of rank who turned Carmelites, in compliance with the spirit of their gallants and of the times, point out what was expected from

* To merit her heart, and to please her bright eyes,

I have fought against kings, and dare fight against the skies.

devotion; but as politeness began to push forward beyond the standard of nature and of utility, it dissipated not only all these romantic ideas, but also in time thrust out sentiment and affection, and left the French in their present situation—the creatures of art. The avidity however of the other European nations in copying their manners and customs is so great, that such as they now are, all their neighbours will probably in less than a few centuries be.

As mankind advance in the principles of society, as interest, ambition, and some of the other sordid passions begin to occupy the mind, nature is thrust out. Nothing surely can be more natural than that love should direct us in the choice of a partner for life, and that the parties contracting in wedlock, should enter into that compact with the mutual approbation of each other. This right of nature; however, begins to be wrested from her in every polite country. The poor are the only class who still retain the liberty of acting from inclination and from choice, while the rich, in proportion as they rise in opulence and rank, sink in the exertion of the natural rights of mankind, and must sacrifice their love at the shrine of interest or ambition.

Such now begins to be the common practice in Britain; courtship, at least that kind of it which proceeds from mutual inclination and affection is, among the great, nearly annihilated, and the matrimonial bargain, not less sordid than that of the East, is made between the relations of the two families, with all the care and cunning that each is master of, to advance its own interest by over-reaching the other. Were we to descend to the middling and lower ranks of life, where freedom of the mind still exists; were we to describe their various modes of

addressing and endeavouring to render themselves agreeable to the fair, we should only relate what our readers are already acquainted with; we shall therefore just observe, in general, that such is the power of love, that it frequently prompts even an Englishman to lay aside some part of his natural thoughtfulness, and appear more gay and sprightly in the presence of his mistress; that on other occasions, when he is doubtful of success, it adds to his natural peevishness and taciturnity, an air of melancholy and embarrassment, which exposes him to the laughter of all his acquaintance, and seldom or never contributes any thing to advance his suit. But this last is not peculiar to the inhabitants of Britain; for, when a few singularities are excepted, which arise from manners and customs, in every other respect the courtship of all polished people is nearly the same, consists chiefly in the lover's endeavouring, by every art, to make his person and temper appear as agreeable to his mistress as possible; to persuade her, that his circumstances are at least such as may enable him to indulge her in every thing becoming her station, and that his inclinations to do so, are not in the least to be doubted. These great points being gained, the lover has commonly little else left to do, but to enter into the possession of his hopes, unless where each party, urged by separate interests, proposes unreasonable conditions of settlement, which frequently break off a match where every other article has been agreed on.

In the course of this enquiry we have seen, that of all the methods practised by the men to insinuate themselves into the affections of the fair, none have been more common than fighting. In ancient times, heroes encountered one another to render themselves acceptable to the ladies they adored. Saxo-Gram-

maticus gives an account of many duels that were fought between private persons to determine which of them should be the successful lover, a practice common among the Scandinavians before they became Christians: princes then led their armies into the field, to fight with each other on the same account; and so rude were the manners, that a king when he fell in love, instead of endeavouring to gain the object by gentle and pacific methods, frequently sent to demand her by threatening fire and sword on a refusal. The Spaniards fight the most ferocious bulls to promote their love; and a few centuries ago, the cavaliers of that and many other nations commenced knights-errant, and rode about the country fighting every thing that opposed them, for the honour of their mistresses. We have already seen, that in some countries, the fairest and most noble virgins were allotted as a reward to the greatest virtue, that in others they were basely sacrificed to the wretch who was able to give the highest price for them. But among the ancient Saxons, at Magdeburgh, they had an institution still more singular, the greatest beauties were, at stated times, with a sum of money as the portion of each, deposited in the hands of the magistrates, to be publicly fought for, and fell to the lot of those who were most famous at tilting.

That the soft and compassionate temper of women, naturally averse to scenes of horror and blood, should be the most easily gained by him who has most distinguished himself in scenes of that nature; appears at first sight an inexplicable paradox, but on a nearer inspection, the difficulty vanishes, when we consider, that in rude and barbarous times, the weakness of the sex made their property, and their beauty made

their persons, a prey to every invader; and that it was only by sheltering themselves in the arms of the hero, that they could attain to any safety, or to any importance. Hence the hero naturally became the object of their ambition, and their gratitude for the protection of his power, obliterated the idea of his crimes, magnified all his virtues, and held him up as an object of love. But besides, in the times of general rapine and devastation, it was only valour and strength that could defend a man's property from being lawlessly carried away, and his family ruined for want of subsistence; and it was only by valour and martial achievements that ambition could be gratified by rising to grandeur and to power. When we survey all these reasons, our surprise that so many warriors in former times fought themselves into the arms of their mistresses, will be much abated.

We have seen in the course of this work, that women have been by authority exposed publicly to sale, we have seen that they have, by order of the magistrates, been publicly fought for, and that, in the extensive regions of the East, which compose almost half the globe, they are bought by a husband as his ox or his ass, and in many respects treated by him worse than these animals. Such a treatment of the objects which nature has taught us to love, and politeness to respect, excites our astonishment and indignation, and we exult in the happier state of our own country, when we consider it as not degraded by any such instances of despotic power, exercised over a sex which nature meant us to cherish and defend; but our exultation on this head is not perhaps so well founded, as we imagine; the matrimonial bargains every day concluded by all the cunning of

relations, and chicanery of lawyers, are a proof that we not only sell the fair sex, but dispose even of ourselves for the sake of their fortunes. Such a spirit of venality in either sex, is a strong symptom of the approaching ruin of the people among whom it is found. Let us remember that wherever the women are the slaves of the men, the men themselves are the slaves of a despot, and that wherever the men have become the slaves of women, luxury and effeminacy have brought them to ruin.

CHAPTER XXV.

Of Matrimony.

SOME regulation of the commerce between the sexes, or the joining of males and females together by mutual ties and obligations, in order to preserve the peace of society, and encourage population, seems either to have been an innate principle in the human mind, or to have arisen early from necessity; as we find it, in one shape or another, existing all over the habitable world.

Antiquarians, who have solicitously endeavoured to trace the manners and customs of past ages; and voyagers and travellers, who have depicted those of the present, have indiscriminately given the name of marriage to every legal or customary junction of the sexes, which they met with in the countries, whose records they have searched or which they have visited in person; and European readers, being accustomed only to one kind of marriage, have generally annexed the same idea, which the word conveys in their own country, to the marriages of the people of all other nations. Marriage, however, is so far from having been an institution, fixed by permanent and unalterable laws, that it has been continually varying in every period, and in every country; and its present indissoluble nature among us, hardly bears the least resemblance to what it was among many of the ancients, or to what it is at present in several parts of the world.

It has long been the opinion of the learned, and many of the most respectable authors are quoted to prove it, that several nations, during their most rude and barbarous state, had not attained to any idea of matrimony, nor had any regulation of the commerce between the sexes; if this is a fact, which, notwithstanding what has been alleged to the contrary, by a learned author of the present age, we have little reason to doubt, it is intimately connected with another; which is, that the dawnings of civilization no sooner began to appear, than these very people discovered the necessity of such a regulation, and carried it into execution, upon the best plans which their limited capacities were capable of inventing; and we scruple not to affirm, that, without it, there could be no safety for the individual; the natural progress of multiplication must be retarded, and no people could ever arrive at any perfection in government or civilization.

Preservation of the individual, and propagation of the species, as they are two of the great ends of our existence, are so intimately connected with our nature, that in a very early period of the world, it must have been discovered, that preservation could not properly be attained, unless individuals appropriated to themselves the produce of their hunting, and certain parcels of ground, from whence the means of that preservation might be derived; and if men could not draw their subsistence so conveniently from the ground, while it was in common, they must, by the same reasoning have discovered, that propagation could not be so properly carried on, unless individuals also of the two sexes were appropriated to each other by some tie or obligation, which should hinder them from being considered as common to the whole species; but of what kind these

ties and obligations were, or how entered into, we can now only conjecture; from the complexion of the times, however, we may suppose, that they were simple, and not entered into with any remarkable pomp or ceremony. This we the more readily believe, when we consider, that in the Mosaic history of the creation, our original mother is introduced as the wife of Adam, without taking notice of any ceremony performed to make her such: and that there was none, appears plain from the circumstances of her case. Every marriage ceremony is only a mutual agreement of the contracting parties, to be faithful to each other, and the calling in of some persons to confirm, or to witness this agreement.—But while only one man, and one woman existed, they had no third person to witness their engagement, nor could they possibly prove unfaithful to each other; consequently could have no use of any mutual engagement to fidelity; unless we can suppose, that when their own posterity became of age, such engagement should become necessary on their account; but here, if we mistake not, nature has interposed her authority, by raising a horror at all incestuous commerce.

In the primitive ages of the world, every thing was done in the most plain and simple manner; a man set up a stone, or erected a pillar, to mark the spot of ground he had appropriated to his own use; and he took unto himself a wife; that is, carried her home to his house, and perhaps made her promise to adhere to him only, and to assist him in bringing up the children they might have together; which seems to be the only mode in which marriages were originally contracted; at least it was the mode during the patriarchal ages. Lamech, one of the sons of Adam, took unto himself two wives. Abra-

ham took unto himself a wife ; the other patriarchs and people followed the example ; and, for many ages, the Israelitish women, and perhaps those of other nations, were appropriated to their husbands in this simple manner.

But besides these marriages, by simple appropriation, there appear to have been others of a nature still more simple. Accidental circumstances sometimes brought a man and a woman together ; and when any children were the produce of their correspondence, natural affection excited them to remain together, and unite their endeavours for the preservation and maintenance of their offspring. A strong proof, that such marriages existed in ancient times, is, that they were much in use among the Romans, and are to be found at this day among some uncultivated people. The most ancient kind of marriage among the Romans, was that in which a man and woman had come together without any previous bargain ; and having lived together for some time, became at last unwilling to part, as they found themselves insensibly become necessary to each other : and, among the Kalmuc Tartars, a young couple agreeing between themselves, retire for one year as husband and wife ; if, in that time, the woman brings forth a child, they remain together ; if not, they either make trial of another year, or agree to part. In the island of Otaheite, the inhabitants pursue incontinent gratifications, wherever inclination leads them ; but when a woman becomes pregnant, the father of her child thereby becomes her husband.

Before the laws of Moses were given to the Israelites, as the rule of their conduct and manners, it is asserted by the Jewish rabbies, that a woman, who

was neither betrothed nor married, might bestow her favours either gratis, or for reward, on any one she pleased, without incurring the least scandal, or confining herself entirely to him, though she lived with him as his wife; but the assertions of these people are far from deserving the greatest degree of credit; for though it seems evident, from the sacred records, that little or no ceremony was used in taking a wife previous to the patriarchal ages, they have particularly described the ceremonies then made use of on that occasion, which we shall take notice of afterwards.

As the number of the human race increased, and the number of incitements to conjugal infidelity were, consequently, increased also, the simple modes of appropriating a woman, by carrying her home, or by having lived with her for some time, were, perhaps, found insufficient, either to check her own inclination to infidelity, or secure her from the attacks of the licentious; hence methods of a more public and solemn nature were fallen upon, and the marriage ceremony probably converted into a covenant, with similar ceremonies to the covenants that were made at the establishing of peace, or securing of property. Many and various were the contrivances made use of to establish and perpetuate the memory of those covenants: Abraham presented Abimelech, king of the Philistines, with sheep and oxen; which he desired him, before witnesses, to accept of as a token, that he should have the property of a well which he had digged. The Phœnicians set up a stone, or a pillar, or raised a heap of stones, as a memorial of any public agreement; a practice which was followed by many other nations. The Scythians, in their alliances and ceremonies, poured wine into an earthen vessel; and having mixed it with the blood of the contract-

ing parties, they dipped a scymiter, some arrows, a bill, and a javelin into the vessel; and after many imprecations on the party who should break the agreement, they themselves first drank of the mixture, and the rest of the company as witnesses followed their example. The ancient Arabians took an oath by cutting the hands of the contracting parties with a sharp stone, then pulling a tuft from the garment of each, dipped them in the blood which flowed from the wounds, and sprinkled the blood upon seven stones set up between them, invoking in the mean time Bacchus and Urania. The ancient Medes and Lycians, in making public agreements, wounded themselves in the arm, and the parties mutually sucked the blood of each other. The Nasamones, in pledging their faith to each other, mutually presented a cup of liquor, and if they had none, they took up dust and put it in their mouths. The Carians and Ionians, in the army of Psamenitus, when they fought against Phanes, slew the sons of the latter, and receiving their blood into a bowl, and mixing it with wine and water, drank it as a pledge of their steady adherence to each other. The other Greeks, and the Romans, in their public contracts joined their hands together, and swore by their gods, by the tombs of their ancestors, or by any other object of awe and reverence.

To these ancient methods of covenanting we shall add a similar one practised at this time at Madagascar. They put into a large vessel filled with brandy, some gold, silver, gun flint in powder, and, if possible, some of the dust of the tombs of their ancestors, to all which they add, blood from the arms of the contracting parties; while this mixture is preparing, their weapons are laid on the ground in form of a cross, soon after, both parties take them up, and

with the points of them in the vessel constantly keep stirring its contents till the agreement is concluded, when the contracting parties, and all who are present, drink till the cup is emptied; after which, they embrace each other and retire. Such were the ceremonies attending covenants and alliances in the primitive ages; and as marriage was an alliance not only between the two parties, but their families and relations, it is probable that some of these ceremonies were made use of to ratify and confirm it.

But though matrimonial agreements were not only made public, but solemnly confirmed by some of the above ceremonies; such is the frailty of human nature, that even these were found insufficient to secure female fidelity; and hence, perhaps, arose the custom of purchasing a wife from her relations for a stipulated price, and a few presents made to the bride herself; a custom also of great antiquity, for we find that Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and Sechem told the brethren of Dinah that he would give whatever dowry they should ask for their sister.—This method of marrying, as it augmented the power of a husband over his wife, gave him greater security for her good behaviour; for by the purchase she became his slave, and on the least suspicion he could confine her, or turn her away at pleasure, upon proof of her guilt.

But whatever were the ceremonies of marriage in the primitive ages, it appears plain that the commerce between the sexes began early to be regulated, as all the most ancient traditions agree in ascribing that regulation to their first sovereigns and law-giver. Menes, who is said to have been the first king of Egypt, is also said to have been the first that introduced matrimony

and fixed the laws concerning it. The Greeks give the honour of this institution to Cecrops; the Chinese to Fo Hi, their first sovereign; the Peruvians to Manco-capac, and the Jews to God Almighty himself; nor does it only seem that matrimony was early introduced, but that its first introduction among most nations, was that of one woman only being destined to one man, as the fables of antiquity when traced as far back as possible seem to hint; Jupiter had only his Juno; Pluto his Proserpine; Osiris his Isis, and the stolen amours of the gods and heroes of antiquity, and the conduct of their wives upon discovering them, seem all plainly to evince that their legal right of commerce with the sex extended only to one woman. The case, however, seems to have been otherwise among the Jews, for as early as the days of Adam, Lamech, once of his sons, introduced the practice of marrying a plurality of wives; a practice which was imitated by the neighbouring nations, till in time it became almost universal.

From the earliest ages of antiquity men were accustomed to feast and rejoice together on memorable events, and on the acquisition of any thing they reckoned valuable: setting aside the value stamped on a woman by love, which we have reason to believe had not, in the times we are speaking of, arisen to any great degree of refinement, she was a valuable acquisition, as she stood in the quality of a servant as well as a wife; in which last quality she gave her husband also a prospect of raising up children, to perpetuate his name, and assist him in old age, circumstances greatly valued in the primitive ages: but besides these, a wife was valuable on another account; while society was in its infancy, almost every family supported feuds and animosities against, and was at war with, its neighbours, about the distribution and

defence of property, and it was only by the alliance of several families together, that they could sometimes be able to support themselves against their more powerful rivals; such alliances, and such additional strength to families, came generally by marrying, and on all these accounts, marriage was considered as an important transaction, and feasts were early instituted at its celebration; which feasts, we have reason to believe, were frequently the whole of the ceremony; served to make the contract public, and also in place of those writings which in our times ascertain the right and privileges of the parties. Laban gathered his friends together and made a marriage-feast, when he deceived Jacob by giving him Leah instead of Rachel; but as this feast is not mentioned as any thing new or uncommon, we have reason to suppose they had been used long before that time. Sampson, when he married Delilah, made a feast which lasted seven days, for so used the young men to do. The Babylonians carried marriage-feasts to such an extravagant length, that many people having ruined their families by the expence, a sumptuary law was made to restrain them. Among the ancient Scandinavians, almost every public transaction was attended with a feast, and that at the celebration of a marriage was a scene of revelry and drunkenness, which was frequently productive of the most fatal effects. The Phrygians too had sumptuous entertainments on these occasions; entertainments also of a like nature were common among the Jews in the time of our Saviour; and they are at this day given almost by all nations, but more particularly by those among whom the excess of politeness has not banished merriment and rustic hospitality.

In an early period of the world, the interest, or sometimes the inclination, of parents, when they had lived in a friendly manner with, and contracted a regard for, their neighbours, naturally prompted them to wish, that a marriage between their children might take place to strengthen the alliance of the families ; and as this wish was frequently formed before the parties were of an age proper for such a junction, they fell upon a method of securing them to each other; by what is called in the sacred writings, betrothing, which was agreeing on a price to be paid for the bride, the time when it should be paid, and when she should be delivered into the hands of her husband. There were, according to the Talmudists, three ways of betrothing : the first, by a written contract; the second, by a verbal agreement, accompanied with a piece of money; and the third, by the parties coming together and living as husband and wife ; which last they could not properly call betrothing, it was marriage itself. The written contract was in the following words :

“ On such a day, month, and year, A. the son of B. has said to D. the daughter of E. be thou my spouse according to the law of Moses and of the Israelites, and I will give thee as a dowry for thy virginity the sum of two hundred Suzims, as it is ordered by our law ; and the said D. hath promised to be his spouse upon the conditions aforesaid, which the said A. doth hereby bind himself, and all that he hath, to the very cloak upon his back ; engages himself to love, honour, feed, clothe, and protect her, and to perform all that is generally implied in favour of the Israelitish wives.”

The verbal agreement was made in the presence of a sufficient number of witnesses, by the man, saying to the woman, Take this money as a pledge, that at such a time, I will take thee to be my wife. A woman who was by any of these methods betrothed or bargained for, was almost in every respect by the law considered as already married, bound nearly by the same ties and obligations, and enjoyed nearly the same privileges and immunities, as she who actually lived and cohabited with her husband.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The same Subject continued.

HITHERTO our observations on the origin and progress of the matrimonial compact have, for the most part, been either general, or confined to periods enveloped in the darkness of the remotest antiquity : we shall now endeavour to trace the ceremonies and usages of that compact in a more particular manner, as well as through periods which begin to be better known, and where, being furnished with more historical facts, we shall have the less occasion to supply their place by probability and conjecture.

- Though, from what we have already observed, it is highly presumable, that the Israelites had no marriage-ceremony before the legislation of Moses, except sending a few presents, or feasting together, to make the affair public ; yet the Rabbies, ever fertile in imagination, have told us the contrary :

“Marriages, say they, were even then agreed upon by the parents and relations of both sides ; which being done, the bridegroom was introduced to his bride, presents were mutually exchanged, the contract signed before witnesses ; and the bride, having remained some time with her relations, was sent away to the habitation of her husband in the night ; with singing, dancing, and the sound of musical instruments.”

This ceremonial bears so strong a resemblance to that which the same Rabbies tell us was instituted by Moses, that it is plain they have either taken it from that, or Moses, if he really did institute any ceremony, must have taken his pattern from the ancient usages and customs of his country; as we may see by the following ceremonial, which they have ascribed to that legislator. When the day appointed for celebrating the wedding was come, which was generally Friday for a maid, and Thursday for a widow, the contract of marriage was read in the presence of, and signed by at least ten witnesses, who were free and of age. The bride who had taken care to bathe herself the night before, appeared in all her splendour, but veiled, in imitation of Rebecca, who veiled herself when she came in sight of Isaac; she was then given to the bridegroom by her parents, in words to this purpose: "Take her, according to the law of Moses;" and he received her, by saying, "I take her according to that law." Some blessings were then pronounced upon the young couple, both by the parents and the rest of the company.* The virgins sung a marriage-song; the company then partook of a repast, the most magnificent that the parties could afford; after which the parties began a dance, the men round the bridegroom, the women round the bride; and this dance they pretended, was of divine institution, and an

* The blessings or prayers generally ran in this style: "Blessed art thou, O Lord of heaven and earth, who hast created man in thine own likeness, and hast appointed woman to be his partner and companion! Blessed art thou, who filled Sion with joy for the multitude of her children! Blessed art thou, who sendest gladness to the bridegroom and his bride! who hast ordained for them love, joy, tenderness, peace, and mutual affection. Be pleased to bless, not only this couple, but Judah and Jerusalem with songs of joy, and praise for the joy thou givest them, by the multitude of their sons and of their daughters."

essential part of the ceremony. The bride was then carried to the nuptial bed, and the bridegroom left in the chamber with her; when the company again returned to their feasting and rejoicing, and the Rabbies inform us, that this feasting, when the bride was a widow, lasted only three days, but seven if she was a virgin; a law, which was so obligatory, that if a man married several wives in one day, he was bound to allow a feast of seven days to each of them, exactly in the order in which they were married.

In periods later than these we are now considering the ceremonies of marriage were, according to the Rabbies, considerably changed. Both the man and woman were led to the house of marriage by their nearest friends, where ten at least were to be present; there the bill of dowry being publicly ratified, the man spoke thus to the woman: "Be thou a wife to me, according to the law of Moses, and I will worship and honour thee, according to the word of God, and will feed and govern thee, according to the custom of those who worship, honour, and govern their wives faithfully. I give thee, for dowry of thy virginity, fifty shekels."

Having given this account of the state of matrimony among the Israelites, let us now turn to the other nations of antiquity, which flourished in the same periods we have been reviewing. It has been already mentioned, that the Egyptians attributed the introduction of matrimony, and the regulation of it by laws, to Menes, said to have been the Cham of the scripture, who was one of the sons of Noah, and their first sovereign. That matrimony was early instituted among a people who took the lead in almost every thing that tended to improve society, we have

little room to doubt : but though, as will appear afterward, we have some account of the several ties and obligations of the married state among them, we are entirely ignorant of the manner in which their marriages were solemnized. In this article, the history of the Philistines, Canaanites, Carthaginians, and many other nations, is involved in the same obscurity. Of the Philistines, however, we may observe, that their ideas of marriage must have been exceedingly crude and indigested, as the father-in-law of Sampson gave away his wife Delilah to another, upon his being some time absent from her.

The ancient Assyrians seem more thoroughly to have settled and digested the affairs of marriage, than any of their contemporaries. Once in every year they assembled together all the girls that were marriageable, when the public crier put them up to sale, one after another. For her whose figure was agreeable, and whose beauty was attracting, the rich strove against each other, who should give the highest price ; which price was put into a public stock, and distributed in portions to those whom nature had less liberally accomplished, and whom nobody would accept without a reward. After the most beautiful were disposed of, these were also put up by the public crier, and a certain sum of money offered with each, proportioned to what it was thought she stood in need of to bribe a husband to accept her. When a man offered to accept of any of them, on the terms upon which she was exposed to sale, the crier proclaimed, that such a man had proposed to take such a woman, with such a sum of money along with her, provided none could be found who would take her with less ; and in this manner the sale went on, till she was at last allotted to him who offered to take her with the smallest portion.—

When this public sale was over, the purchasers of those that were beautiful were not allowed to take them away, till they had paid down the price agreed on, and given sufficient security that they would marry them ; nor, on the other hand, would those who were to have a premium for accepting of such as were less beautiful, take a delivery of them, till their portions were previously paid. It is probable, that this sale brought together too great multitudes of people from inconvenient distances, to the detriment, perhaps, of agriculture and commerce, and that strangers could not give sufficient security to fulfil the bargains they had made ; for a law was afterwards issued, prohibiting the inhabitants of different districts from intermarrying with each other, and ordaining, that husbands should not use their wives ill ; a vague kind of ordonnance, which shews how imperfectly legislation was understood among those people.

History has not, so far as we know, given us any account of what was meant farther by marrying the woman, after having thus publicly bargained for her : if we may judge, however, from the customs of the times, and of the neighbouring nations, we may suppose, that their further marriage consisted only in taking home to their houses the wives they had bought, and calling their friends together to feast with them, and be witnesses of their fulfilling the engagement they had entered into. If, between the time of the sale and this public solemnization, the parties happened to differ, or if they could not agree afterwards, the man was obliged to refund the money he had received, and they parted with mutual consent. This being the case with those who received money with their wives, it has likewise been supposed, that those who paid money for them, had

a power of demanding it again, on disagreement and separation : but of such power we have no account, nor is it probable that it existed ; for the money so paid, being put into a public stock, and distributed to such a variety of hands, became thereby totally irredeemable. These hints concerning matrimony among the Assyrians plainly prove, that the proper regulation of it was an object of their most serious attention ; but another circumstance proves this in a still stronger manner. The Assyrians had a court, or tribunal, whose only business was to dispose of young women in marriage, and to see the laws of that union properly executed. What these laws were, or how the execution of them was enforced, are circumstances which have not been handed down to us ; but the erecting a court solely for the purpose of taking cognizance of them, suggests an idea that they were many and various.

We have already seen the manner in which the ancient Scythians, so much famed for natural affection and fidelity, ratified their covenants with each other, and have reason to suppose, that marriage was one of the covenants so ratified : when we turn to the other nations, in the times under review, we find no account of their marriage-ceremonies till we come to the Greeks ; and this silence on the subject gives us reason to suppose, that in many countries they really had no other than the simple mode of carrying home a bride, and making a feast for her reception ; which we are the more inclined to believe, when we consider the circumstantial detail we have, of many of the public ceremonies of Darius, of Cyrus, and of Alexander ; that we are not only told of their being married, but have also an account of the time when, and the persons to whom, but not the least account of the manner how ; which

the historians of the times would scarcely have omitted, had their marriages been celebrated with pomp and public ceremony.

Though Cecrops, the first king of the Greeks, is supposed to have lived nearly about the time of Moses, and to have instituted marriage among his people; yet during the whole of the heroic ages, which lasted many centuries after Moses, they appear to have been so rude and uncultivated, that we cannot suppose they had brought this institution to any perfection, either in its ceremonies or its laws. Whether Cecrops ordained that the Greeks should follow the customs of the Egyptians in marrying, or went a step farther, and fixed new ceremonies of his own invention, we know not: we are, however, informed, that at a marriage, even in the heroic ages, there was a meeting of relations and of neighbours; who, in order to recall to memory the times of simplicity, when their ancestors lived almost entirely on the spontaneous productions of the earth, presented the new-married couple with a basket of acorns mixed with bread; a custom, which, perhaps, gave birth to the nuptial scattering of nuts among the Romans, who borrowed almost every usage of the Greeks. At this meeting, the Greeks, according to the hospitality of uncultivated people, had feastings and rejoicings; as appears from Theseus being invited to the nuptials of Pirithous, when he helped him to kill a great number of Centaurs, who in their cups had offered violence to the female guests at the wedding; from the story of Aitis, the son of Cybele, who was by Midas to have been married to his daughter, had not Cybele, prevented it by breaking into the city, and causing a frenzy to fall upon all those who assisted at the ceremony of the nuptials. Some are of opinion, that pledges and securities

were, by the institution of Cecrops, mutually interchanged between the parties; but this, and almost every other circumstance relative to the mode of marrying in the heroic ages, is only conjecture; we shall, therefore, proceed to give some account of that mode, in periods when the history of the Greeks, being less involved in fable is more distinctly known.

As soon as the consent of the parents and relations was obtained, the parties were sometimes betrothed, in these words: "I give you this my daughter to make you the father of legitimate children." After which the young couple plighted their faith to each other by a kiss, or joining together of their right hands, a custom observed by the Grecians in all public agreements. The Thebans plighted their faith to each other at the monument of Iolaus, who, after he had been advanced to heaven was supposed to take care of the affairs of love. The Athenian virgins, when marriageable, presented baskets of little curiosities to Diana, to obtain leave to depart from her trains, she being esteemed the peculiar patron of maidens; and before her shrine at Brauron, an Athenian village, in order to appease her for intending to depart from the state of virginity in which she so much delighted. The Bœotians and Locrians of both sexes offered, before their nuptials, a sacrifice to Euclia, or Diana, to avert her resentment against them, for changing from a single to a married life. These sacrifices consisted in consecrated wafers, cakes, and animals, which were slain on her altars. Several other of the gods and goddesses had sacrifices offered at their altars on this occasion, as Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, and Venus, who was generally invoked with peculiar fervency, as being the goddess of love. The Lacedæmonians had an ancient statue of this goddess, to whom it was incumbent upon all

mothers to offer sacrifices on the marriage of their daughters. The multiplicity of male and female deities among the Greeks, who were concerned in the affair of love, made the invocations and sacrifices on this occasion a tedious affair. Even the Fates were by no means to be forgot, but the favour of the Graces was purchased by the most ample offerings.

The time appointed for these ceremonies was commonly the day before marriage, when the parties having cut off some of their hair, presented it to such deities as they most regarded, or to whom they thought themselves under the greatest obligations.

Besides these sacrifices preparatory to the marriages, other victims were offered at the solemnization of it; and on this occasion, as soon as the victims were slain, they were opened, the gall taken out, and thrown behind the altar, to intimate that all gall and bitterness should be thrown behind the parties, before they enter into the married state. The entrails were then carefully inspected by the soothsayers, if they declared that any thing unlucky appeared in them, the nuptials were either delayed or broke off; and the same thing took place if any ill omen happened, during the celebration of them, as was the case at the marriage of Clitophon with Caligone, where, an eagle having snatched a piece of the flesh of the victim from the altar, the whole company dismissed full of terror and consternation. Fortunate omens gave great joy, and the most fortunate of all others, was a pair of turtles seen in the air, as those birds were reckoned the truest emblem of conjugal love and fidelity; but if one of them was seen alone, it infallibly denoted separation and all the ills attending an unhappy marriage. We cannot

help observing here, to what a train of groundless fears and apprehensions superstition subjects her votaries, and how easily they may be deceived, in taking for the denunciations of heaven, the frauds and tricks of their enemies, as sometimes happened to the Greeks; if what is reported be true, that such as were averse to marriage, or wished the parties to be unhappy, sometimes took a single turtle along with them, and letting it fly, either put an end to the ceremony, or filled the hearts of the contracting parties with terror and astonishment; but we must remark also, that those who wished well to the young couple, sometimes carried a pair of turtles along with them, and by their flight diffused joy and gladness into all the company, and particularly to those who were the most interested in the fate of the marriage.

The bride and bridegroom were dressed, and adorned with garlands of herbs and flowers, and cakes made of sesame, a plant remarkable for its fruitfulness, were plentifully distributed among the company. The house of the bridegroom was likewise adorned with garlands: a pestle was tied to the door of it, a maid carried a sieve, and the bride an earthen vessel with barley, all of which were emblems of her future employment. She was conducted in the evening to the house of her husband in a chariot, seated between the husband and one of his relations; servants carrying lighted torches immediately before, and singers and dancers preceding the whole cavalcade: and when the bride alighted from the chariot, the axle-tree of it was burnt, to signify that there was no method left for her to return back.—As soon as the young couple entered the house, figs and other fruits were thrown upon their heads, to denote plenty; and a sumptuous entertainment was

ready for them to partake of, to which all the relations on both sides were invited; during the feast, the deities that presided over marriage were invoked, and honoured with music and dancing. The chief intention of this feast, according to the Greek authors, was to make the marriage publickly known, and on that account was an essential part of the ceremony.

The dancing ended, the married couple were conveyed to their bed; previous to which, the bride bathed her feet in water, always brought from the fountain Callirhoe, on a superstitious opinion of some secret virtues it contained; this done, she was lighted to bed, by a number of torches, according to her quality; round one of these torches, the bride's mother tied her own hair-lace. All the relations of both parties assisted at these ceremonies, and to be absent from them was considered as the greatest misfortune. It was also the privilege of the mother to light the torches, a privilege of which the Grecian matrons were exceedingly tenacious. The young couple being now left together, were, by the laws of Athens, obliged to eat a quince, after which the bridegroom proceeded to loose the bride's girdle, the young men and maidens standing at the door singing epithalamia, the men making a great noise with their feet and voices to drown the cries of the bride. This done, the company retired, and returned in the morning, to salute the new married couple, to sing epithalamia again at the door of their bed-chamber.

These ceremonies being finished, the bride presented to her husband a garment, and presents were made both to the bridegroom and bride, by their relations, which consisted in such kinds of household

furniture as was then made use of, and were carried in great state to their house by a company of women, preceded by a boy in white apparel, with a lighted torch in his hand, and between him and the women, a person with a basket of flowers, as customary at the Grecian processions.

Such were the most material ceremonies at the celebration of a Greek marriage. A variety of others are frequently alluded to in their authors; but as they would be tedious to relate, and seemed to have been less essential, we shall pass over them in silence, only remarking, that in some of their states, they invoked the crow, to put them in mind of the affection they ought to bear to each other, and it was a common proverb among them, when they heard that such a woman was married to a man whom they presumed would not use her well, to say, She will need to invoke the crow.

At Sparta, marriages were conducted in a very different manner. When the preliminaries were settled by a female match-maker, she shaved the bride, dressed her in men's clothes, and left her sitting upon a mattrass; the bridegroom stole privately to her, and having staid a short time, stole as privately away, a conduct which the laws of that republic obliged a married couple to observe, in their intercourse with each other, through the whole of their lives.

Having thus far traced the rites of marriage, we think it necessary to observe, that the detail we have given has not been solely with a view to exhibit the ceremonies with which it is in different countries celebrated, but also with an intention to discover, whether it is of divine or human institution.

In the course of our narration we have seen, that the Jews attributed the institution of marriage to the Almighty himself, when he gave Adam a female for his companion ; but as the scriptures mention no such institution, we may with equal reason suppose, that he instituted marriage among the other animals, when he created them male and female. We have further seen, that the Rabbies attributed the ceremonial to be observed at matrimonial engagements, to Moses, who was divinely inspired ; but Moses himself mentions no such thing, and has only in his code of legislation promulgated a few laws for the better regulation of the conduct of married people towards each other ; and as no legislator issues his laws to regulate what is properly regulated already, we may suppose from the laws which Moses made upon this occasion, that, before his time, marriage was in so imperfect a state, that we cannot reasonably conceive it to have been the institution of an all-perfect Being.

In the prosecution of our enquiry among the other primitive nations, we have scarcely discovered almost any of them even pretending, that marriage was the institution of their gods ; but of their first legislators, as Menes in Egypt, and Cecrops in Greece ; nor have we found, even among the Jews themselves, that either prophet, or priest, were concerned in the celebration of marriage, though they managed every thing that was considered as sacred, or of divine institution : the same was the case among the other primitive nations ; they had priests, to whom the celebration of every holy rite was committed ; but their magistrates, and the relations of the contracting parties, were the only people who concerned themselves about marriage ; a strong presumption, that it was

not considered in any other light than as a civil compact.

Having premised thus much at present, on a subject which we shall have occasion to discuss more fully afterwards, before we proceed any farther in our endeavours to investigate the ceremonies by which men and women were joined together in matrimony, we shall take a view of the duties, obligations, and customs of that state; and as the manner in which wives are acquired, often determines the manner in which they are used by their husbands, let us inquire into the former, before we proceed to the latter.

Wherever the rights of nature remain unviolated by oppression, women have a power of disposing of themselves in matrimony; where these rights are a little infringed, the consent of parents, relations, or guardians is necessary; where they are totally obliterated, they are disposed of by their kindred, or even by the magistrates, to the highest bidder. The legislature of almost every country has interdicted such women as are not of age from disposing of themselves; and it is only in Europe, where the rights of nature remain so far untouched, that even such women as are of age enjoy this power. It is true, that a woman who is more than fourteen, if she get married without the consent of her parents, is so bound, that the parents cannot render the engagement void; but they may hinder it from taking place, if they are informed of her intention, till she has completed her twenty-first year, which they cannot do afterwards, although their consent is even then generally asked from paternal duty and affection. Among the Greeks, Romans, and several other nations, a woman never obtained any power of chusing for herself a partner in wedlock, but was through life entirely at the disposal of her parents

and guardians. When the Roman empire was overturned, and the feudal system erected on its ruins, that system ordained, that no daughter of a vassal could be given in marriage without the consent of the liege lord, as well as of her own parents; and, at this day, the daughters of the great, even in the politest countries of Europe, can scarcely be said to enjoy any disposing power of themselves, being frequently stipulated for in a treaty of peace, or courted and even married by proxy to a man whom they never saw, and consequently cannot tell whether they shall approve of or not.

But of all the modes of getting possession of a wife, after the first ages of barbarity were over, that of purchasing her was the most common; it was the practice of the East from time immemorial, and continues so to this day. We have seen that Abraham bought Rebecca for his son; that Jacob, destitute of any thing to give, served Laban fourteen years for his two daughters; and that Sechem, when in love with Jacob's daughter, was determined not to break off the match for whatever price her friends might fix upon her: and we now add, the same custom is mentioned in a variety of places of Homer; that it was practised in Thrace, in India, Spain, Germany, and Gaul, and at this day in Hindostan, China, Tartary, Tonquin, Pegu, Turkey: by the Moors of Africa, and the savages in a variety of other parts of the world. In Gaul, during the fifth century, the princess Clotilda, daughter of Gondebaud, king of the Burgundians, being married to Clovis by proxy, the proxy presented her with a sol and a denier, as the price of her virginity, a custom which existed among that people long afterward. This custom, though under a different form, maintained itself still longer in England; in the time of Edward

the Third, Richard de Neville gave twenty palfreys to the king to obtain his request to Isola Bisset, that she should take him for a husband; and Roger Fitz-Walter gave three good palfreys, to have the king's letter to Roger Bertram's mother, that she should marry him. In those times, when the kings of England exercised so unlimited a power over their subjects, the king's request, or his letter, amounted to an absolute command, and the money paid to obtain these, was as literally the purchase of a wife, as if it had been paid for at a public sale.

In Timor, an island in the Indian Ocean, it is said, that parents sell their children in order to purchase more wives. In Circassia, women are reared and improved in beauty and every alluring art, only for the purpose of being sold. The prince of the Circassians demanded from the prince of Mingrelia an hundred slaves loaded with tapestry, an hundred cows, as many oxen, and the same number of horses, as the price of his sister. In New Zealand, we meet with a custom which may be called purchasing a wife for a night, and which is a proof that those must also be purchased who are intended for a longer duration; and what to us is a little surprising, this temporary wife, insisted upon being treated with as much deference and respect, as if she had been married for life; but in general, this is not the case in other countries, for the wife who is purchased, is always trained up in the principles of slavery; and, being innured to every indignity and mortification from her parents, she expects no better treatment from her husband.

There is little difference in the condition of her who is put to sale by her sordid parents, and her who is disposed of in the same manner by the

magistrates, as a part of the state's property. Besides those we have already mentioned in this work, the Thracians put the fairest of their virgins up to public sale, and the magistrates of Crete had the sole power of chusing partners in marriage for their young men; and, in the execution of this power, the affection and interest of the parties was totally overlooked; and the good of the state the only object of attention; in pursuing which, they always allotted the strongest and best made of the sex to one another, that they might raise up a generation of warriors, or of women fit to be the mothers of warriors.

In the primitive ages, when the number of the human race was but few, and when every one might consequently appropriate to himself, and cultivate such grounds as lay most convenient for his use; when his wife and children, as soon as they were able, assisted in this and every other kind of labour; a wife was rather an advantage than otherwise, and therefore she was bought, both as an instrument of propagation, and an assistant in the occupations of life. But as societies were formed, lands and goods of every kind appropriated, and women became, perhaps, less industrious, every addition to a family became an additional expence; hence, instead of a man paying a price for his wife, it was necessary he should receive something along with her: marriage, therefore, became a compact between a man and one or more women, according to the custom of the country; to join their stocks, interests, and persons together, that they might be the better enabled to bring up a family, and carry on the trade or business by which they were to acquire subsistence; and the stock or fortune of a woman so married, was called her portion or dowry, and in process of time

came to be settled upon her as a security from want, if her husband should die before her.

As the Egyptians were supposed to be the first people who arrived at any degree of cultivation, among them we meet with the first account of portions. Pharaoh gave the city of Gazer, as a portion with his daughter, to Solomon king of Israel. We do not recollect any account of portions given by any other of the ancients, till we come to the Greeks; when we find Phares of Chalcedon, ordering, by a law, that the rich should give portions with their daughters to the poor, but receive none with such wives as were married to their sons; a law, which he had founded on the custom of his country; for Helen brought to Menelaus the kingdom of Sparta, and afterwards, in default, we suppose, of male heirs, the daughters of several Grecian kings carried the kingdoms of their fathers, as dowries to their husbands. But although this was the case with regard to kingdoms, yet the contrary seems in other cases to have been the general practice, as we learn from the story of Danaus, whose daughters having rendered themselves infamous, their father caused a proclamation to be made, that he would not demand any presents from those who should marry them; and from the conduct of Agamemnon to Achilles, when he tells him, that he will give him one of his daughters in marriage, without requiring any presents. The presents here mentioned were of two kinds; the first was given to the father of the lady, as a bribe or price to engage him to give his daughter to the suitor; the second, to the lady herself, in order to gain her affection: and some authors are of opinion, that the presents thus made to the father and the daughter, were joined together to compose the fortune of the latter, which was settled upon her

as her dower; so that if the husband did not literally purchase a bride, he bribed her to his arms, and to an independence, with his own money.

As the principles of equity and of justice began to be understood, it was easy to discover, that women who had assisted their fathers and husbands in acquiring the goods of fortune, should not be given in marriage by the first without portions, nor left by the last at death without settlements as an equivalent for these portions; hence the custom of receiving a fortune with a bride, and settling at least an equivalent upon her and her heirs, insinuated itself into every country, in proportion as its inhabitants became civilized, and acquainted with the natural rights of mankind.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The same Subject continued.

BESIDES the methods of purchasing wives, and agreeing with them by a mutual compact, polygamy and concubinage are circumstances which greatly influence the conduct of a husband towards them. Polygamy, or the custom of marrying a plurality of women, began in a very early period of the world. Lamech, one of the sons of Adam, took two wives, and from that time forward it is probable, that all the inhabitants of the East followed his example, and took as many as their inclinations and circumstances would allow of. From the manners of the primitive ages, we may suppose, that concubinage followed soon after polygamy, though we have no distinct account of it till the time of Abraham, in whose history we are presented with the ceremony of making a concubine; a ceremony which to us at this period appears not less singular than unnatural. Sarai, Abraham's wife, being barren, takes her handmaid Hagar, presents her to her husband, and prays him to go in unto her, and raise up seed to Sarai. Although we are not here told of any compulsion on the part of Abraham, it would, nevertheless, seem that this was not altogether a voluntary act of his wife, as it is so natural for women to submit with reluctance, to allow another to share the embraces of *their* husbands, which even now in Hindostan, where the practise has subsisted time immemorial, they are brought to with the greatest difficulty; as we find by one of the laws of

that people, which ordains, “ that wherever a husband, on his contracting second marriage, may give his wife to pacify her, is to be reckoned her own property.”

Polygamy and concubinage having in process of time become fashionable vices, the number of women kept by the great became at last more an article of grandeur and state, than a mode of satisfying the animal appetite : Solomon had threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. Maimon tells us, that among the Jews a man might have as many wives as he pleased, even to the number of a hundred, and that it was not in their power to hinder him, provided he could maintain, and pay them all the conjugal debt once a week ; but in this duty he was not to run in arrear to any of them above one month, though with regard to concubines he might do as he pleased.

It would be an endless task to enumerate all the nations which practised polygamy ; we shall, therefore, only mention a few, where the practice seemed to vary something from the common method. The ancient Sabæans are not only said to have had a plurality, but even a community of wives ; a thing strongly inconsistent with that spirit of jealousy which prevails among the men in most countries where polygamy is allowed. The ancient Germans were so strict monogamists *, that they reckoned it a species of polygamy for a woman to marry a second husband, even after the death of the first. “ A woman, say they, has but one life, and one body, therefore should have but one husband ;” and besides, they added, “ that she who knows she is ne-

* Monogamy is having only one wife.

ver to have a second husband, will the more value and endeavour to promote the happiness and preserve the life of the first." Among the Heruli this idea was carried farther, a woman was obliged to strangle herself at the death of her husband, lest she should afterwards marry another; so detestable was polygamy in the North, while in the East it is one of these rights which they most of all others esteem, and maintain with such inflexible firmness, that it will probably be one of the last of those that it will wrest out of their hands.

The Egyptians, it is probable, did not allow of polygamy, and as the Greeks borrowed their institutions from them, it was also forbid by the laws of Cecrops, though concubinage seems either to have been allowed or overlooked; for in the *Odysssey* of Homer we find Ulysses declaring himself to be the son of a concubine, which he would probably not have done, had any great degree of infamy been annexed to it. In some cases, however, polygamy was allowed in Greece, from a mistaken notion that it would increase population. The Athenians, once thinking the number of their citizens diminished, decreed that it should be lawful for a man to have children by another woman as well as by his wife; besides this, particular instances occur of some who transgressed the law of monogamy. Euripides is said to have had two wives, who, by their constant disagreement, gave him a dislike to the whole sex; a supposition which receives some weight from these lines of his in *Andromache* :

—ne'er will I commend

More beds, more wives than one, nor children curs'd
With double mothers, banes and plagues of life.

Socrates too had two wives, but the poor culprit had as much reason to repent of his temerity as Euripides.

Polygamy seems not to have been entirely eradicated among the Christians in the sixth century, as we find it then enacted in the canons of one of their councils, that if any one is married to many wives he shall do penance. Even the clergy themselves, in this period, practised bigamy,* as we find it ordained by another council held at Narbonne, that such clergymen as were bigamists, should only be presbyters and deacons, and should not be allowed to marry and consecrate. But our astonishment is still more excited, to find instances of bigamy and polygamy so late as the sixteenth century. The German reformers, though their declared intention was to conform literally to the precepts of the gospel, were, nevertheless, inclined to introduce bigamy as not inconsonant with these precepts. Philip, Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, wanted, in the lifetime of his wife, to marry a young lady, named Catharine Saal, and having some scruples of conscience, though in every other respect a man of good sense, he seemed to believe, that, with the approbation of Luther and his brethren, the moral turpitude, if there was any in marrying two wives, might be set aside; he, therefore, represented to them his case, and told them, that his wife, the princess of Savoy, was ugly, had bad smells about her, and often got drunk; and that his constitution was such as laid him under the frequent necessity of gratifying his appetite; and concluded with some artful hints, that unless they granted him a dispensation to marry ano-

* He who marries two wives commits bigamy; if more than two, it is polygamy.

ther wife, he would ask it of the pope. Luther, upon this, convoked a synod of six reformers, who found that polygamy had been practised by a Roman emperor, and by several of the kings of the Franks ; that marriage was only a civil compact, and that the gospel had no where in exprefs terms commanded monogamy. They therefore signed a permission for Philip to marry another wife, which he did soon after, with the seeming consent of his first wife, the princess of Savoy ; and thus Luther exercised an authority which not even the most enterprising of the popes, in the plenitude of their temporal and apostolic power, had ever dared to attempt.

The famous Jack of Leyden, who is so well known in history, pretending himself to be a prophet and a king, thought that in the article of women he had a right to follow the example of the kings of Israel, by taking as many wives as he thought proper, and actually proceeded so far as to marry seventeen, and had he not been cut short in the career of his glory and fanaticism, would probably have married twice that number.

As the men have almost in all countries arrogated to themselves the power of making laws and of governing the women, they have in a great variety of places indulged in a plurality of wives, but almost entirely debarred the women of a plurality of husbands ; there are, nevertheless, a few instances of their enjoying this privilege, in places where their credit and influence seem equal, if not superior to their husbands. We have already taken notice, that in some provinces of ancient Media, the women had a plurality of husbands, as the men in others had a plurality of wives. On the coast of Malabar, a woman may have to the number of twelve husbands ; and in

some cantons of the Iroquois in North America, she may have several. Father Tanchard reports, that in the neighbourhood of Calicut, the women of the superior casts may have a variety of husbands, and that some of them actually have ten, all of whom they consider as so many slaves subject to their charms. A gentleman who has lately visited the kingdoms of Bantan and Thibet, observes, that all the males of a family are frequently served by one wife. Such institutions, as they militate against the jurisdiction of the men, and are deviations from the custom of almost all countries, must have originated from extraordinary and uncommon circumstances; but what these were, or when they took place, are among the desiderata of history, which are lost in the abyss of antiquity.

It would only be treading the path, which hundreds have trod before us, should we attempt here to recite all the arguments that have been used for and against polygamy: the greatest part of those against it, have always turned upon this hinge, that all men are by nature equal, and have consequently an equal right to a wife; that the two sexes are nearly equal in number; and where one man marries a variety of women, there can be none left for several others. We pretend not to favour polygamy, as we think it far from being either natural or political; but we cannot help observing one circumstance, which we do not recollect to have met with, that in the countries where it is practised, it becomes in some degree necessary, on account of the great number of eunuchs, which make the number of women greatly exceed that of the men; so that while the infamous practice of making eunuchs is allowed, polygamy must be allowed also, otherwise many women must for ever want husbands.

Wherever women are considered in so mean a light as to be purchased for money; wherever they have not influence or power to prevent their husbands from the practices of polygamy and concubinage, the treatment they receive from these husbands is regulated by the methods of acquiring them. A man thinks it hard, if he has not the liberty of disposing of what he purchased, when he is no longer pleased with it: hence, wherever wives are bought, they are generally divorced at pleasure; and what seems still less natural, they are sometimes borrowed and lent, like a piece of money, or of furniture. The Spartans lent a wife with as much indifference, as they would have done a horse, or an ass; and the elder Cato is said to have philosophised himself into the same custom. Where polygamy takes place, a husband is naturally deafened with the jealousies and contentions of his wives; and on that account finds it necessary to rule them more with the iron rod of a tyrant, than the love and affection of an husband.

Matrimony, in all nations, being a compact between a male and female, for the purpose of continuing the species, the first and most necessary obligation of it has been thought fidelity; but, by various people, this fidelity has been variously understood: almost all nations, however, ancient and modern, have agreed in requiring the most absolute unconditional fidelity on the part of the woman; while, on that of the man, greater latitude has been given. Thus we have seen, that though among the Jews a woman was strictly confined to one man, the man was allowed as many wives and concubines as inclination dictated, and circumstances allowed: nor was this the case only among the Jews, but among the Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes,

Persians, and indeed among the greatest part of the inhabitants of the East, where it continues to this day: but its present existence is not confined to the East; it spreads itself over several other parts of the globe, and is found even in North America; where the Moxes indulge in polygamy and concubinage, and at the same time punish, with the most exemplary severity, the least appearance of unchastity in their wives. Civilians, who have endeavoured to assign a reason for this difference, tell us, that the hand of severity is held so closely over the incontinence of married women, and so much latitude given to the men, because the men generally have the care of providing for the offspring; and it would be hard that a man should be obliged to provide for, and leave his estate to children, which he could never with certainty call his own, were the same indulgence given to the women as to the men. A shorter way of explaining the matter, would have been, to have said, that men are generally the framers and explainers of the law. Where women have shared in the legislations they have put their own sex on a more equal footing with ours.

Where civil society has made little or no progress, the distinguishing characteristic of power is to tyrannize over weakness, wherever it is found, or however it is circumstanced; nature having given to men stronger bodies, and, in some respects, perhaps, stronger minds than to women, till taught by culture, and softened by politeness, they have always made use of that strength to enslave them. Of the truth of this, the whole history of every savage period and people is a proof; but we shall descend to some particular instances; and the first is, the almost unlimited power vested in the Jewish husbands, of divorcing their wives at pleasure, without

assigning any tolerable reason for so doing. Another proof, was the trial of jealousy, which we have already mentioned; a ceremony, the most arbitrary and extraordinary that we are presented with in the annals of history. When to these we add their power of annulling the most solemn vows of their wives, and of turning them into menial servants, there remains not the least shadow of a doubt, that their conduct was unequitable and tyrannical.— But we should be happy to have it in our power to say, that they were the only people who behaved to their wives in this manner; which, however, was far from being the case; wives are confined by all the tyrants of the East, enslaved by all the savages of America and elsewhere; and the reader need only turn back to the chapter on the rank and condition of women, to have the most ample conviction of these, and many other illegal practices, to which they were obliged to submit.

But besides the illegal advantages, which power is ever apt to assume, when opposed to weakness; as men were almost every where the lawgivers, most of the legal advantages of matrimony were also on their side. Whoever among the Jews had married a wife, could, not, on any account, be forced to leave her for the space of one year. Almost every where, to command and to rule, are powers placed in the hands of the husband. Among the Romans, even in their most polished state, in certain cases, the husband might proceed so far as to punish his wife by death. Amongst almost every savage people, whipping, and even death itself, are frequently inflicted by an enraged husband. In a council of the Christian prelates and clergy, held in the year 400, it was decreed, that if any clergyman's wife had sinned,

her husband should keep her bound, and fasting in his house; only he should not take away her life.

The Brazilians take as many wives as they think proper, dismiss them when they find it convenient, and punish their incontinence with death. In Europe, the power of a husband is considerably extended by the laws of the gospel, and of the constitution, both over the person and property of his wife; but this power is generally executed with so much lenity and indulgence that a stranger, on seeing a spouse and his loving rib together, would be apt to imagine it was placed on her side. This is owing, in some measure, to politeness, as well as to fortune; for such is the power of fortune and property over the conduct of the human species to each other, that they constantly command at least the external appearance of deference to the possessor: wherever, therefore, portions become fashionable, they obliterate the slavery of a wife to her husband, put a stop to polygamy, and discountenance concubinage; for what woman will voluntarily purchase a tyrant, or give the whole of her fortune for the share only of a husband; which share she must maintain against an unlimited number of rivals. While an European wife, therefore, bringing an acquisition of wealth along with her, is treated by her husband as his equal, and frequently honoured with superior notice, the wife of an Eastern, being purchased, is considered as his slave; is never allowed to eat with, or in the presence of her husband; seldom to sit down in his company, and always obliged to him as to a master and superior: and not even content with her paying him all these testimonies of respect in his presence, she is obliged to submit to a variety of mortifications in his absence.

“ If a man, says the Shaster,* goes on a journey, his wife shall not divert herself, nor play, nor shall she see any public show, nor shall laugh, nor shall dress herself in jewels and fine clothes, nor shall she see dancing, nor hear music, nor shall sit in the window, nor shall ride out, nor shall behold any thing choice and rare; but shall fasten well the house-door, and remain private, and shall not blacken her eyes with eye-powder, and shall not view her face in a mirror; she shall never exercise herself in any agreeable employment during the absence of her husband.”

For all these mortifications, one would naturally expect some kind treatment and indulgence from the husband, when he returns home: but the contrary is the case; for we are also informed by the Shaster, that if she scolds him, he may turn her away; that he may do the same, if she quarrels with any body else, spoils his or her own property, or even if she presumes to eat before he has finished his meal; and that he may cease from any further conjugal duty, if she is barren, or always brings forth daughters.

Although the men have constantly assumed the power of making human, and explaining divine, laws, yet they have not left such women as entered into the state of matrimony entirely without privileges. Among the Jews, when a man married an additional wife, the food, raiment, and duty of a husband, he was in no ways to diminish to those he had before.—Mahomet, when he permitted every man to have four wives, easily foreseeing that some of them would be neglected, while others were greater favourites, positively instituted, that every thing, as provisions,

* The Shaster is the Bible of the Hindoos.

dress, and the duty of a husband, should be equally divided among them. In the Maldivian isles, a man is allowed to marry three wives, and is obliged to observe the same law. This law appears to have been among the Jews, in order to prevent the increase of polygamy, which was every day becoming more common; and it seems to have been well calculated for that purpose, especially in the last clause, as it will readily be agreed, that no husband was able to render the same duty of marriage to a plurality of wives, that he had done to one. Among this people, also, a bond servant-maid was liable at any time to be sold; but by being betrothed to the son of her master, he could not afterwards sell her, though he might turn her away, without performing the promised marriage.

At what period, or by whom, the laws of the Egyptians were first promulgated, is uncertain; but if what has been asserted by some ancient authors be true, that the men, in their marriage-contracts, promised obedience to their wives, we may suppose that the women had no inconsiderable share in their legislation, otherwise they could hardly have obtained so singular a privilege. But, singular as this privilege may appear, it is yet exceeded by the power of wives in the Marian islands: there, a wife is absolutely mistress of every thing in the house, not the smallest article of which can the husband dispose of without her permission; and if he proves ill-humoured, obstinate, or irregular in his conduct, the wife either corrects him, or leaves him altogether, carrying all her moveables, property, and children along with her. Should a husband surprise his wife in adultery, he may kill her gallant, but by no means must use her ill. But should a wife detect her husband in infidelity, she may inflict upon him

what punishment she pleases ; to execute which, she never fails to assemble all the women in the neighbourhood, who, with their husband's caps on their heads, and armed with lances, march to the house of the culprit, tear up all his plants, destroy his grain, and having ruined every thing without doors, fall like furies upon his house, and destroy it, together with the owner, if he is not already fled. But besides this punishment inflicted on his incontinence, if the wife does not like her husband, she complains that she cannot live with him, and gathers together her relations, who, glad of the opportunity, plunder his house, and appropriate to the wife and to themselves the spoil. Such privileges, however, we cannot suppose to be legal, as the inhabitants of the Marian islands are too rude to have many laws, and too little under the subjection of their governors, to observe those they have.

Such of the officers of the Grand Signior as are married to his daughters or sisters, are honoured in public, but in private debased by the alliance; for they are not allowed to come into the presence of their wives, nor to sit down by them, without their permission, and almost in every particular are obliged to act in a character little less subordinate than the meanest of their slaves. Among the Natches, the daughters of noble families are by law obliged to marry only into obscure families, that they may exert a governing and directing power over their husbands ; which they do so effectually, that they turn them away when they please, and replace them by others of the same station. Such is their punishment for the slighter offences against the majesty of their wives ; but when any of them are unfaithful to the marriage-bed, those wives have a power of life or death over them. Wives who are of the blood of

their great fun, or chief, may have as many gallants as they please, nor must their dastardly husbands so much as seem to see it. But this is not all: such husbands must, while in the presence of their wives, stand in the most respectful posture, accost them in the same submissive tone as their domestics, and are not allowed to eat with them, nor derive any privilege from so exalted an alliance, but exemption from labour, which is more than counterbalanced by every species of debasement and mortification. The Moxes, a people also of North-America, are said to be obliged by law to yield a most obsequious obedience to their wives, and to shift their habitations, and follow them, when, and to what place they shall direct.

Among the ancient Germans, and other northern nations, we have seen that women were in general honoured and esteemed, but we have no account of their wives being distinguished by any particular privilege. Among a few of their tribes, however, who allowed of polygamy, one of the wives always claimed and exercised a superiority over the rest; but her prerogative was dearly purchased, if she survived her husband, for she was obliged to burn herself on his funeral pile. In Turkey, where the most unlimited polygamy and concubinage are allowed, the privilege of the lawful wives is, that they can claim the husbands every Friday night; but every other night he may, if he pleases, dedicate to his concubines. Even among the Hindoos, where women have little regard paid to them but as the instruments of animal pleasure, the property of a wife is secured from her husband; and we are told by their laws, that he may not take it without her consent, unless on account of sickness, or to satisfy the demands of a creditor, who has confined

him without victuals ; and that if, on any other account, he should seize on it, he shall be obliged to repay it with interest.

As fidelity to the marriage-bed, especially on the part of the woman, has always been considered as one of the most essential duties of matrimony, all wise legislators, in order to secure that fidelity, have annexed some punishment to the breach of it ; these punishments, however, have generally some reference to the manner in which wives were acquired, and to the value stamped upon women by civilization and politeness of manners. It is ordained by the Mosaic code, that both the man and the woman taken in adultery shall be stoned to death ; whence it would seem, that no more latitude was given to the male than to the female. But this was not the case ; such an unlimited power of concubinage was given to the men, that we may suppose him highly licentious indeed, who could not be satisfied therewith, without committing adultery. The Egyptians, among whom women were greatly esteemed, had a singular method of punishing adulterers of both sexes ; they cut off the privy parts of the man, that he might never be able to debauch another woman ; and the nose of the woman, that she might never be the object of temptation to another man.

Punishments nearly of the same nature, and perhaps nearly about the same time, were instituted in the East Indies against adulterers ; but while those of the Egyptians originated from a love of virtue and of their women, those of the Hindoos probably arose from jealousy and revenge. It is ordained by the Shaster, that if a man commit adultery with a woman of a superior cast, he shall be put to death ; if by force he commit adultery with a woman of an

equal or inferior cast, the magistrate shall confiscate all his possessions, cut off his genitals, and cause him to be carried round the city, mounted on an ass. If by fraud he commit adultery with a woman of an equal or inferior cast, the magistrate shall take his possessions, brand him in the forehead, and banish him the kingdom. Such are the laws of the Shaster, so far as they regard all the superior casts, except the Bramins; but if any of the most inferior casts commit adultery with a woman of the casts greatly superior, he is not only to be dismembered, but tied to a hot iron plate, and burnt to death; whereas the highest casts may commit adultery with the very lowest, for the most trifling fine; and a Bramin, or priest, can only suffer by having the hair of his head cut off; and, like the clergy of Europe, while under the dominion of the Pope, he cannot be put to death for any crime whatever. But the laws, of which he is always the interpreter, are not so favourable to his wife; they inflict a severe disgrace upon her, if she commit adultery with any of the higher cast; but if with the lowest, the magistrate shall cut off her hair, anoint her body with Ghee, and cause her to be carried through the whole city, naked, and riding upon an ass; and shall cast her out on the north side of the city, or cause her to be eaten by dogs. If a woman of any of the other casts goes to a man, and entices him to have criminal correspondence with her, the magistrate shall cut off her ears, lips and nose, mount her upon an ass, and drown her, or throw her to the dogs. To the commission of adultery with a dancing-girl, or prostitute, no punishment nor fine is annexed.

It is worth remarking here, that the word adultery, which among all other nations is understood to mean an illicit correspondence between married

people, among the Hindoos is extended to every species of illicit commerce between the sexes; nor is it less remarkable, that among this people, the passions are so warm and ungovernable, that every opportunity of committing this crime, is considered as an actual commission of it: thus they have three distinct species of adultery; the first is, when in a place where there are no other men, a person holds any conversation with a woman, and winks, and gallantries and smiles pass on both sides; or the man and woman hold conversation together in the morning, or in the evening, or at night, or the man dallies with the woman's clothes; or when they are together in the garden, or an unfrequented place, or bathe together in the same pool. The second is, when a man sends sandal wood, or a string of beads, or victuals and drink, or clothes, or gold, or jewels, to a woman. The third is, when a man and woman sleep and dally upon the same carpet, or in some retired place, kiss and embrace, and play with each other's hair; or when the man carries the woman into a retired place, and the woman says nothing. Such are the definitions of adultery in the laws of the Hindoos; but in the punishments annexed to them, it appears that their legislature was not directed so much by the moral turpitude of the crime, as by the dignity of the several castes, and by that revenge which so naturally results from jealousy, in a climate where animal love is the predominant passion.

By the laws of Moses, when a man caught a betrothed virgin in the field, and lay with her, he only was put to death, as the law in that case supposed, she had cried and there was none to help her; but in the city, if any one lay with a betrothed virgin, they were both stoned; for then the law

supposed, that if she had cried, she would have found assistance to save her from the ravisher : and so great was the abhorrence of adultery in the first ages, that most of the ancient legislators prohibited it by the severest penalties ; and there are still extant some Greek copies of the Decalogue, where this prohibition is placed before that against murder, supposing it to be the greater crime.

In the heroic ages, while revenge was almost the only principle that actuated the Greeks, adultery was frequently punished by murder. In the Italian states, in Spain and Portugal, though they have proper laws for the punishment of this crime, revenge considers them as too mild, and cruelly watches an opportunity of stabbing the offender. In no case has the principle of revenge operated more strongly on the human mind than punishment of this crime. When the Levite's wife was defiled, it instigated the Israelites to take arms, and almost destroy the whole tribe of Benjamin, because they refused to give up the adulterers. Thyestes having debauched the wife of his brother Atreus, Atreus invited him to a feast, and in revenge entertained him with the flesh of his own son. Margaret of Burgundy, Queen to Lewis Hutin, king of France, was hanged for adultery ; but not contented with the death of her gallants, they were ordered to be flead alive.

So greatly does a man reckon himself dishonoured and affronted by the infidelity of his wife, and so strong is the principle of revenge, that the punishment of female adulterers will frequently not wait for the cool and dilatory sentence of the law, which does not keep pace with the vengeance which the husband reckons due to the crime. In some places, the execution of this law is left to the husband. The

Novels of Justinian gave a husband a right to kill any person whom he suspected of abusing his bed, after he had given him three times warning in writing before witnesses, not to converse with her.— Among the ancient Swedes and Danes, if a husband caught his wife in the act of adultery, he might kill her, and castrate her gallant. And among some of the tribes of Tartars, it was not uncommon for a husband to destroy his wife even upon suspicion.— Some of the eastern chiefs, on suspicion of the infidelity of their wives and concubines, order them to be buried up to the chin, and left to expire in the utmost agony. The Grand Signior, if he suspects any of his women, orders her to be sewed in a sack, and thrown into the next river. Among the ancient Germans, the husband had a power of instantly inflicting punishment on his adulterous wife; he cut off her hair in the presence of her relations, drove her naked out of his house, and whipped her out of the city. In the kingdom of Benin, the husband exercises a similar power. Somewhat less severe is the punishment of an adulteress in several other countries, where the sense of honour is less acute, and the injuries done to it less stimulating. The Chinese, a phlegmatic kind of people, sell an adulteress for a slave. Their neighbours of Laos do the same. And in old times, even the king of Wales thought that a full reparation was made for the dishonour of defiling his bed, by obliging the offender to pay a rod of pure gold, of the thickness of the finger of a ploughman, who had ploughed nine years, and which would reach from the ground to the king's mouth when sitting.

In what has been now observed, we see the gradation of the ideas concerning adultery. Among some people it is thought a crime not to be expiated

but with death; among others whipping is thought a sufficient punishment; some again think a fine fully compensates for it; while in some savage countries, it is not considered as having the smallest degree of criminality. In Louisiana, Pegu, Siam, Cambodia, and Cochin-china, it is even looked upon as an honour; they present to strangers their wives and daughters, and think it a disgrace to their beauty and merit if they are refused.

Where the punishment of adultery is vested in the laws of the country, it is commonly less severe, than where vested in the hands of the party offended; and even when in the hands of the offended, it is commonly more or less severe according to the ideas entertained of women, and to the power assumed over them; where it is vested in the hands of the women, though it may not be more severe than when in those of their husbands, yet as their passions and jealousies are stronger, they are apt to inflict it where the certainty of the guilt is not so well ascertained.

Of all the modes which have been adopted for the punishment of adultery, with the greatest efficacy, and at the same time with the least seeming severity, we give the preference to these which follow; Edgar, king of England enacted, that an adulterer of either sex should, for the space of seven years, live three days every week upon bread and water; Canute, in the beginning of his reign, finding that the punishment then in use of cutting off the nose and the ears, did not answer the purpose, decreed, that such as broke their conjugal vow should be condemned to perpetual celibacy. A similar idea for the punishment of the same crime, has suggested itself to the Muskohge Americans, a people noway famous

for ingenuity in legislation; they oblige the adultress to observe the strictest continence during four full moons from the time that her crime was discovered. Perhaps this idea of a mild and efficacious punishment was more perfectly conceived by the Greeks, than any of the foregoing instances; in some of their states, a woman offending in this manner, was never after allowed to adorn herself with fine clothes, and if she did, any one might tear them off, and beat her, so as not to destroy or disable her; adultresses were subject to the same treatment if they were found in the temples of the gods, and their husbands were forbid ever to cohabit with them under the pain of being declared infamous.

We might easily insert here, a variety of other methods of punishing adulterers, but as these few convey a tolerable idea of the sentiments entertained of this crime in different periods, and by different people, we shall proceed to observe, that the canon law, following rather the footsteps of Moses than of Jesus, always condemned adulterers to death: one of the canons has these remarkable words: "Let adulterers be stoned, that they may cease to increase, who will not cease to be defiled." And Pope Sixtus Quintus, not content with the death of adulterers themselves, ordained, that such husbands as knew their wives to be unfaithful, and did not complain to him, should be put to death also. Amidst all this seeming regard for conjugal fidelity and sanctity of manners, we are sorry to observe, that the clergy of the middle ages, while they enacted canons against, and punished adultery with excommunication, were themselves a kind of licensed adulterers: debarred from marriage, regardless of character, and exempted from the punishments inflicted on the laity, their debaucheries were often carried to such

lengths as we could scarcely credit, were we not assured of them by the most authentic records.

Before we leave the subject of adultery, we shall just observe, that, among some nations, there were methods devised for such women as were accused of that crime to clear themselves; among these the waters of jealousy is the first we meet with. In Sicily, Japan, and on the coast of Malabar, the accused is obliged to swear that she is innocent; the oath is taken in writing, and laid on water, and if it does not sink, the woman is held to be innocent. These and such like are the ridiculous exculpatory proofs required in countries overspread with ignorance and superstition; in these that are more enlightened, those who are accused of this crime can only invalidate the evidence brought against them by the testimony of witnesses.

In the primitive ages, before laws of matrimony were properly understood and digested, and before the rights of women were settled upon any other basis than the pleasure of their parents and husbands, the felicity of divorcing or putting away a wife, was almost equal to that of obtaining her. The ancient Israelites had a power of divorcing their wives at pleasure. "When a man," says Moses, "hath taken a wife and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found in her some uncleanness, then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it into her hand, and send her out of his house." This vague expression of uncleanness gave occasion among the Jews to the most frequent divorces, even upon every trifling occasion, insomuch that one of their rabbies tells us, it was lawful, and sometimes practised by a husband, if a wife spoiled his dinner in cooking; and by ano-

ther, that a husband might give his wife a bill of divorce, if he met with a woman who pleased him better, or looked handsomer in his eyes. A privilege which gave this fickle people such an unlimited right of getting rid of their wives when disagreeable, was highly valued, and reckoned one of their distinguishing prerogatives: but he who deflowered a virgin forfeited it, and the law obliged him, in compensation for that injury, not only to pay her father fifty shekels of silver, but to marry and retain her for life. Was it possible to devise a law that more strongly protected female chastity?

But this facility of obtaining or rather of giving, a divorce, was not peculiar to the Jews; it seems to be the result of the nature of the matrimonial engagement; for when a man must purchase his wife as he does a slave, it naturally follows, that he may turn her off when he finds that she does not answer the purpose for which he intended her; a rule, which will be found to obtain pretty universally among all nations. The negroes purchase their wives, and turn them away when they think proper; in China and Monomatapa, they observe the same custom; all the savages of South America, who live near the Oroonoko, purchase as many wives as they can maintain, and divorce them at pleasure; and even in the isthmus of Darien, and on the banks of Hudson's river, they purchase a plurality of wives, and dispose of them according to the dictates of convenience and inclination.

In such places, the bargain a man makes for his wife, is on his part absolute and unconditional; but in countries where the natural rights of women are established, where the bargain is between the man and his wife, is conditional, and the fortunes of

both are joined in one common stock; the nature of this bargain implies, that neither of them are privileged to dismiss the other, without a just cause; in many parts of the world, this cause has been construed to be a mutual dislike of the parties, and a mutual consent of separation; in others, barrenness of the woman is thought a sufficient cause. In Europe, no cause has been deemed valid, unless adultery in the woman, and impotence in the man. Several of the primitive councils enjoined a husband, for the salvation of his soul, and on pain of spiritual censure, to put away an adulterous wife, which was putting into the hands of the husband a power of divorce; but the council of Trent afterwards decreed, that the marriage-bond was indissoluble, and could not be broken on any account: notwithstanding this, the Pope, who frequently arrogated to himself a power of trampling on all the laws of heaven and earth, readily enough granted divorces, with or without cause, to such as were able to pay for them, either in money, or by adding to the power and territory of the church; while the poor plaintiff could not gain a hearing at the chair of him who styles himself, servant of servants.

English lawyers, ever fond of verbosity and endless distinctions, have divided divorces into two distinct kinds; the first, when the party is divorced from bed and board, but not allowed to marry another; the second, when he or she is divorced or loosened from the chains of matrimony, and allowed to marry again at pleasure: but neither of these kind of divorces can be obtained by any other means than a proof of adultery. Milton, and several other writers who have followed him, galled by the indissoluble chain which they thought themselves intitled to break, have endeavoured, by a variety of

arguments, to shew, that equity, natural justice, and sound policy, all dictate, that the matrimonial compact ought to be dissolved from a variety of other causes besides adultery. The legislature has, however, hitherto taken no notice of these arguments; when philosophy and reason have still farther enlightened the human mind, they may perhaps undergo a scrutiny, and from that scrutiny, some new regulations may arise.

In rude and uncultivated states of society, we have seen that the power of divorce is placed in the husband; in civil society, it is vested in the laws: but in some states it appears to have been occupied by, and in others formerly vested in, the women. Josephus tells us, that Salmone, sister to Herod the Great, was the first who took upon her to repudiate her husband, and that her example was soon followed by many others. Among the Cherokees, the women are said to marry as many husbands as they think proper, and to change and divorce them at pleasure; a custom, which, with little variation, we have already seen practised by the women of several other countries. In the Wallian laws it is decreed, that a wife may leave her husband, and demand her portion again, if he has as offensive breath: what is remarkably whimsical, the same laws ordain, that, on a divorce, the woman shall divide the substance into two equal parts, and the man shall have choice of the lots; but in particular, the man shall have all the swine, and the woman all the poultry.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The same Subject continued.

THOUGH we have seen, in the course of our enquiry, that the ideas of the matrimonial compact, and of the duties and privileges of the parties entering into it, have been very different in different periods, and among different people ; yet, as any kind of regulation of the commerce between the sexes is better than a vague and undetermined commerce, every well regulated state has solicitously endeavoured either to promote that kind of matrimony already in use, or to rectify its errors, and model it in a new and better manner ; and such is the prevalence of nature, that though the powers and privileges of a husband are so enormous, it is only in a few places that we have met with any backwardness in the women to trust themselves in their hands.

By the story of Jephtha's daughter, we are informed, that it was customary among the Jews, for a woman, who, on account of a vow or any other reason, was condemned to perpetual celibacy, to bewail her virginity ; the reason assigned for which, by commentators, is, that the Jews having a promise that the Messiah should be born of one of their women, every woman among them flattered herself, that she might arrive at that honour, from all prospect of which she was entirely cut off, if she died a virgin. But the Israelitish damsels were not the only women of ancient or modern times, who reckoned

perpetual virginity a misfortune. The ancient Persians were of opinion, that matrimony was so essentially necessary to man, that such of either sex as died single, must infallibly be unhappy in the next world. This opinion gave birth to the most singular custom we meet with in history; when any one died unmarried, a relation, or, in default of such, a person hired for the purpose, was solemnly married to the deceased, as soon as it could conveniently be done after death, as the only recompence now left for having neglected it in life.

The Turks of this present period at Constantinople, reckoning, perhaps, the first great command, "Increase and multiply," the most necessary of all others, entertain the same opinion of virginity, though they take no such ridiculous methods of endeavouring to obviate the effects of it on their future happiness. "Every woman, say they, was made to have as many children as she can, she therefore, who dies unmarried, dies in a state of reprobation." Virginity was likewise reckoned a disgrace by the Greek women; Sophocles makes Electra bewail bitterly her hard fate in not being married; and Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, being angry with his daughter for dissuading him from going to meet Orates, governor of Sardis, threatens her, that should he return in safety, he would defer giving her in marriage for a long time. But this female dislike to living single, has not been peculiar to any period or people, it has universally prevailed among the sex. In many nations, laws have been promulgated to prompt the men to enter into matrimony, to prompt the women none have ever been needed.— "Young women, says the celebrated Montesquieu, who are conducted by marriage alone to liberty and pleasure, who have a mind which dares not think, a

heart which dares not feel, eyes which dare not see, ears which dare not hear ; who appear only to shew themselves silly ; condemned without intermission to trifles and precepts ; have sufficient inducements to lead them on to marriage : it is the young men that want to be encouraged."

A variety of encouragements have accordingly been offered by the wisest legislators to tempt young men into matrimony ; but not content with these, disagreeable circumstances, and even punishments, have been also annexed to the state of a bachelor. The Lacedemonians were not only severe against those who abstained from, but also always against those who deferred, entering into the conjugal state : no man among them could live single beyond the time appointed by the laws of his country, without incurring several penalties, the first of which was, old bachelors were obliged once every winter to run naked round the market place, singing a song which pointed out their crime, and exposed them to ridicule. They were excluded from the games where the Spartan virgins, according to the custom of their country, danced naked. And, on a certain solemnity, the women, in revenge for the contempt which was shewn them, were allowed to drag these despisers of matrimony round an altar, beating them all the time with their fists ; and lastly, they were deprived of all that honour and respect which the young men of Greece were obliged to pay to their seniors. One of their old captains coming into an assembly, when he expected that a young man by whom he stood would have risen to give him his seat, received this rebuke from him : " Sir, you must not expect that honour from me, being young, which cannot be returned to me by a child of yours when I am old."

The Jews were of opinion, that marriage was an indispensable duty implied in the words "Increase and multiply;" a man, therefore, who did not marry at or before the age of twenty, was considered as accessory to every irregularity which the young women for want of husbands might be tempted to commit; and hence there is a proverb in the Talmud: "Who is he that prostitutes his daughter, but he who keeps her too long unmarried, or gives her to an old man." Among the ancient Persians, though there was no positive law for the encouragement of matrimony, yet their kings frequently proposed annual prizes as a reward to those who were fathers of the greatest number of children.

While the Romans retained their primitive simplicity and integrity, no laws were requisite to encourage their young men to matrimony; when they became debauched with the love of pleasure, and expensive in the pursuit of it; when their wives required immense sums to uphold their extravagance, and their children scarcely less to give them a proper education, neither threatenings nor encouragements could sometimes prevail on them to enter into that state. In no country was there ever a legislature more forward in attempting to encourage matrimony, in none were the subjects ever less forward in seconding these attempts.

As soon as luxury and expence had begun to frighten, and licentious pleasures to decoy the Roman citizens from marriage, to counterbalance these, it was thought necessary to deny such men as had not entered into that alliance the privilege of giving evidence in courts of justice; and the first question asked by the judge was, Upon your faith, have you a wife, whereby you may have children? If he

answered in the negative, his evidence was refused. And so intent were the Roman consuls at one time upon multiplying their citizens, that they extorted from all the men an oath, that they would not marry with any other view than that of increasing the subjects of the republic, and that whoever had a barren wife should put her away and marry another. But the men, who had other opportunities of satisfying their appetites than that of marriage, continued still fond of celibacy, which obliged the censors, upon finding that population was decreasing, to extort another oath from them, that they would marry with all convenient speed.

As it commonly happens that oaths extorted by compulsion are but ill observed, unless the same compulsory power also enforces obedience to them, those imposed upon the Romans had but little effect; to remedy which, new honours were heaped upon the married, and fines and punishments were laid upon the batchelors. It was ordained, That such of the plebeians as had wives, should have a more honourable place in the theatres than such as had none: that the married magistrates and patricians should have the precedence of such of the same rank as were unmarried; that the fines which had been first levied by Camillus and Posthumus upon batchelors, should be again exacted.

When Cæsar had subdued all his competitors, and most of the foreign nations which made war against him, he found that so many Romans had been destroyed in the quarrels in which he had often engaged them, that, to repair the loss, promised rewards to fathers of families, and forbade all Romans who were above twenty, and under forty years of age, to go out of their native country.

Augustus, his successor, to check the debauchery of the Roman youth, laid heavy taxes upon such as continued unmarried after a certain age, and encouraged with great rewards the procreation of lawful children. Some years afterwards, the Roman knights having pressingly petitioned him that he would relax the severity of that law, he ordered their whole body to assemble before him, and the married and unmarried to arrange themselves in two separate parties, when, observing the unmarried to be the much greater company, he first addressed those who had complied with his law, telling them, That they alone had served the purposes of nature and society; that the human race was created male and female to prevent the extinction of the species; and that marriage was contrived as the most proper method of renewing the children of that species. He added, that they alone deserved the name of men and fathers, and that he would prefer them to such offices as they might transmit to their posterity. Then turning to the batchelors, he told them, That he knew not by what name to call them; not by that of men, for they had done nothing that was manly; not by that of citizens, since the city might perish for them; nor by that of Romans, for they seemed determined to let the race and name become extinct; but by whatever name he called them, their crime, he said, equalled all other crimes put together, for they were guilty of murder, in not suffering those to be born who should proceed from them; of impiety, in abolishing the names and honours of their fathers and ancestors; of sacrilege, in destroying their species, and human nature, which owed its original to the gods, and was consecrated to them; that by leading a single life they overturned, as far as in them lay, the temples and altars of the gods; dissolved the government, by disobeying its laws;

betrayed their country, by making it barren. Having ended his speech, he doubled the rewards and privileges of such as had children, and laid a heavy fine on all unmarried persons, by reviving the Poæan law.

Though by this law all the males above a certain age were obliged to marry under a severe penalty, Augustus allowed them the space of a full year to comply with its demands; but such was the backwardness to matrimony, and perversity of the Roman knights, and others, that every possible method was taken to evade the penalty inflicted upon them, and some of them even married children in the cradle for that purpose; thus fulfilling the letter, they avoided the spirit of the law, and though actually married, had no restraint upon their licentiousness, nor any incumbrance by the expence of a family.

Such were the methods the Romans were obliged to make use of, in order to prevent matrimony from falling almost into disuse. In succeeding periods, scarcely any thing compulsory has been attempted. It has been generally thought sufficient to stain, with some degree of infamy and dishonour, all kinds of illicit connection between the sexes, to make the way to the enjoyment of lawful love as easy and accessible as possible, and to trust the rest to nature. In this last respect, the English legislature seems of late to have acted contrary to the common maxim, and thrown a variety of obstacles in the way of matrimony; but should decrease of people be the consequence, that body, it is presumable, are too wise to persist in a voluntary error.

As every regulation of the commerce between the sexes seems plainly to tend towards the salutary pur-

pose of population and continuance of the species, for every wise legislature, not solely contented with encouraging or even enforcing matrimony, has likewise endeavoured to correct all those errors and abuses which frustrated the main intention of it, and to oblige the sexes to join themselves together in such a manner as might tend to the increase and multiplication of their species; thus the Jewish laws forbade eunuchs to marry. Lycurgus enjoined the coupling together of such men and women as were strong and healthful, and gave a liberty of prosecuting such men as did not marry at all, as deferred marrying till they were too old, or married improperly; and thus in Rome, it was ordained, That no woman under fifty might marry a man above sixty, and that no man above sixty should marry a woman who was not, like himself, far advanced in life; laws of this nature, though evidently tending to promote the great end and design of marriage, have in subsequent periods been but little attended to.

If what has been advanced by naturalists be true, that crossing the breed, either of animals or vegetables, tends greatly to improve their strength and vigour; then it will follow, that such political reasons, as regard strength and population, have likewise prompted all wise legislators to interdict the marriages of near kindred. Among the Jews, the degrees of consanguinity, within which it was unlawful to marry, were accurately marked by the code of Moses. Among other ancient nations, the affair was subject to much variation. The Egyptians were allowed to marry their sisters. The Scythians were even said to have married their mothers, grandmothers, and sisters. The Medes and Persians married their sisters; and, among the Tartars, a man might marry his daughter, but a mother might not

marry her son. Among the Hunns, the men married whoever they pleased, without the least regard to consanguinity; a son even married the widow of his father: something of the same nature seems to have been practised by the kings of Israel; for Absalom is said to have gone in unto the wives and concubines of David, his father, when he rebelled against him. In Peru, the Inca, or king, was always married to his sister; or, if he had no sisters, to his nearest female relation: and, in Otaheite, we are told, that their young king was designed as a husband to his sister, when he became marriageable. At Athens, a man might marry the sister of his father, but not the sister of his mother.

The natural advantages arising from crossing the breed of men, as well as other animals, in order to preserve the species from degenerating, must have been the result of experience and observation; it would therefore be long before they were attended to; and hence, though Moses, who was inspired by the Divinity, appears to have been acquainted with them, the other nations, whom we have mentioned, were not; and, consequently, long indulged themselves in marrying, as inclination, or convenience, dictated. But another political reason may be given, why the marriage of near kindred was prohibited. Before mankind were thoroughly civilized, and brought under the government of laws, families were frequently at war with one another; either on account of property, which was then unsettled, or from their natural inclination to rapine and plunder; in this state every acquisition of strength to a family, was an addition of its security; instead, therefore, of marrying in his own family, or among his own kindred, who were already in his interest, a man would, from motives of policy, rather wish to take

a wife from a neighbouring family, and by that means bring it into an alliance with his, a circumstance which would tend greatly to the security of both; and hence the practice of marrying of kindred would fall into disuse.

But besides these, and other political reasons that might be given against near kindred and relations intermarrying with each other, there are also natural reasons that strongly counteract such alliances. The marriage of a father with his daughter would, in most cases, be preposterous; as the husband would generally be past the age of propagation long before his wife. The marriage of a son to his mother, besides being liable to the same objection of inequality of age, would likewise confound the nature of things; as the son ought to have an unlimited respect for his mother, and the wife an unlimited respect for her husband. But though similar reasons do not militate against the marriage of brothers and sisters with each other, yet nature herself seems here to have interposed her authority; she seems not to have given to brothers and sisters, the same power of raising the passions and emotions of love in each other, as she has given to those who are less known, and nowise related. The emotions, which pass between a brother and a sister, are friendship; in the same circumstances, between a young man and woman, not related to each other, they would be love.

With respect to the prohibitions, concerning the marriage of relations to each other, it is a thing extremely delicate to fix exactly the point at which the laws of nature stop. The greater part of civilized nations seem, in this respect, not to have differed widely from the directions of Moses. the Christian world had been entirely governed by the rules of

that lawgiver, except in some periods, when a spirit of greater sanctity extended it still wider. In a council, held by pope Honorius, in the year 1126. marriages were proscribed between all relations, till after the seventh generation; and all who had married within that degree, were ordered to put their wives away: such were the laws the see of Rome imposed upon mankind; but as, in other cases, it reserved to itself a power of dispensing with them; and, like the English, who will not allow any body to abuse their kings but themselves, the popes would not suffer any but themselves to infringe the laws of the pentateuch or of the gospel.

But besides the restrictions laid upon marriage, by consanguinity and politics, there are others affecting certain classes of mankind, which seem to have arisen solely from opinion or caprice. Such are those which custom has imposed almost every where, on people of the same religion, and of the same rank and condition of life, restricting them from marrying those of a different religion,* or of an inferior condition; such are those that the laws of Brama have imposed on the Hindoos, whereby both the men and women, of every particular cast, are prohibited from marrying into any other cast; but what we have more particularly in view, is the restrictions which, in this particular, have been laid upon the clergy of a variety of nations. While the Israelitish laity were at liberty to marry whom they pleased, the priests were prohibited from marrying a woman that was a whore, or that had been put away from her husband: or, in short, any other but a virgin. The Egyptians, though they indulged their laity in poly-

* By the ancient law, a Christian, of either sex, marrying with a Jew, was to be burnt or buried alive; and at Geneva, a marriage between a Protestant and a Roman Catholic, is not valid.

gamy, would not grant the same liberty to their priests. After the introduction of the Christian religion, the clergy were in marriage restricted by almost the same laws as those of Moses; and if the wife of a clergyman, particularly of a bishop, died before him, he was never allowed to take another. In process of time it became unlawful, according to the canons of the church, for a clergyman to marry upon any pretence whatever; a scheme which, as we shall see afterward, was the source of much wrangling among the priests, and of much mischief to society.

Though, by the Mosaic law, the whole body of the Israelites were strictly prohibited from intermarrying with other nations; yet, in the twenty-first chapter of Deuteronomy, we find an allowance given them to make wives of the captives taken in war; and the preparation of these captives, to fit them for so near an alliance with their captors, was such as would not a little disgust a modern lover: the bride was to be brought to the house of her future husband, and there to shave her head; a circumstance of the most mortifying nature to a woman, as the loves and the graces wanton in waving ringlets; besides this, she was to put the raiment of captivity upon her, and to wear it a month, and comply with some other ceremonies; of the intention of which, we are, at this period, entirely ignorant.

We return now to take a further view of the ceremonies of marriage, and to trace the progress of that institution, from the ancient Greeks, where we left it, to the present times.

There were three different kinds of marriage among the Romans, distinguished from each other

by the names of Conferration, Coemption, and Use; Conferration was the manner in which only the pontiffs and other priests were married, and was always celebrated by a priest; and we call the attention of our readers to this remarkable circumstance, that, in the marriages of the Roman pontiffs, we discover the first instance of priests having celebrated the rites of that institution. The ceremony consisted in the young couple eating a cake together, made only of wheat, salt, and water; part of which, along with other sacrifices, were, in a solemn manner, offered to the gods of marriage.

The second kind of marriage, called Coemption, was celebrated by the parties solemnly pledging their faith to each other, by giving and receiving a piece of money; a ceremony which was the most common way of marrying among the Romans, and which continued in use even after they became Christians. When writings were introduced to testify that a man and woman had become husband and wife, and also, that the husband had settled a dower upon his bride, these writings were called *Tabulæ Dotales*, dowry tables; and hence, perhaps, the words in our marriage ceremony, I thee endow.

The third kind of marriage, denominated Use, was, when the accidental living together of a man and woman had been productive of children, and they found it necessary, or convenient, on that, and other accounts, to continue together; when, if they agreed on the matter between themselves, it became a valid marriage, and the children were considered as legitimate. Something similar to this, is the present custom in Scotland; where, if a man and woman have lived together till they have children, if the man marry the woman, even upon his death-bed, all the

antinuptial children become thereby legitimated, and inherit the honours and estates of their father. The case is the same in Holland; with this difference only, that all the children to be legitimated must appear with the father and mother in church, at the ceremony of their marriage.

When a marriage was celebrated, in any of the two first methods, in order to know the pleasure of the gods, the auspices were first of all consulted, and the days which they held unfortunate avoided.— When the contract was drawn up, it was sealed with the seals of the parents, and the portion sometimes deposited with the augur; the bridegroom sent to the bride a plain iron ring. On the wedding-day, while the bride's head was dressing, it was customary to divide her hair into six tresses, with the point of a spear, after the manner of the vestals; to teach her that she was to be a vestal to all but her husband. She was then crowned with a wreath of vervain, and other herbs, gathered by her own hands; over the wreath they sometimes threw a veil; and put on her feet a pair of shoes, of the same colour as the veil, and so high as to make her appear taller. In ancient Rome, when the couple were ready for the ceremony, they put a yoke upon their necks, called *Conjugium*; and hence our word conjugal, or yoked together, is derived: a ceremony which is more emblematical of the matrimonial state, than any we have hitherto met with. That the bride might seem reluctantly to part with her virgin state, they feigned to force her from the arms of her mother; which was done by the light of five torches carried by five boys, previously washed and perfumed, in honour of the five divinities of marriage, Jupiter, Juno, Venus, Diana, and the goddess Persuasion. The bride was led by two young children to the house of

her husband; a distaff was carried behind her, with a spindle, and a trunk or basket, in which was her toilette; she was sprinkled with lustral water, in order that she might enter holy into the house of her husband; when she arrived at the door, which was adorned with garlands of flowers and evergreens, fire and water were presented to her, and she was at the same time asked her name; to which she answered, Caia, to signify that she would be as good a wife as Caia Cæcilia, who was famous for the domestic and conjugal virtues.

Before the bride entered the house, she put wool upon the door, and rubbed it with oil, or with the fat of some animal; she was then carried over the threshold, which the augurs reckoned exceedingly unlucky for her to touch, on her first entrance: immediately after, the keys of all things in the house were delivered to her, and she was set upon a sheep's skin with the wool on it, to teach her, that she was from that to provide clothes for her family. After the young couple were conducted to their chamber, immediately before the company took their leave of them, the bridegroom scattered nuts to the children, and the men sung verses; to obviate charms and incantations. Care was taken that there should be no light in the nuptial chamber, to spare the modesty of the bride, and prevent the bridegroom from discovering her blemishes: on the next day, the husband gave a public entertainment, when the bride, appearing on the same couch with him at table, leaned upon him with an air of familiarity, and in her discourse seemed to glory so much in having thrown off her virgin modesty, that it became a proverb in Rome, when a woman talked indecently, to say, she talks like a bride.

Such were the ceremonies by which a husband and wife were joined together, and such the additional ceremonies that served to give solemnity to their junction. In the early periods of Rome, Romulus ordered, that no woman should pretend to direct her husband, but that a husband might discard his wife, if she poisoned the children, counterfeited the keys, or committed adultery: after-periods gave him a power to inflict a suitable punishment upon her, if she acted perversely, dishonestly, or drank wine; and even to kill her, if he surprised her in infidelity to his bed. But all the privileges were not on the side of the husband; some of a very extraordinary nature belonged to the wives, or rather to the widows, of Romans. Children born ten months after the death of the husband were reckoned legitimate; and Hadrian, thinking this period too short, extended it to eleven.

Among the northern nations who were contemporary with the Romans, and who afterwards overturned their empire, a surprising similarity of manners was every where observable. Wherever fighting was concerned, they were universally distinguished by a brutal ferocity almost inconceivable; while, in regard to the fair sex, they carried their politeness in many particulars to a degree hardly known even among the most civilized nations. From the remotest antiquity, they confined themselves to one wife, to whom they were married in a manner more solemn than we commonly meet with among a people so rude and uncultivated. The father, or guardian, gave away his daughter in words to this effect: ‘ I give thee my daughter in honourable wedlock, to have the half of thy bed, the keeping of the keys of thy house, one-third of the money thou art at present possessed of or shalt possess hereafter, and

‘ to enjoy the other rights appointed to wives by ‘ law.’ The husband then made his bride a present, by way of dowry: the relations of both parties were witnesses of what he gave; which were not things adapted to flatter the vanity, or adorn the person of the bride, but commonly consisted of some oxen, a bridled horse, or a shield, spear, or sword; in return for which, the bride, too, made her husband a present of some arms; and the mutual interchange of these presents they esteemed the most indissoluble tie, as they were given and received before witnesses the most nearly connected with them, and before the connubial gods.

As modes and customs are perpetually changing with the times and circumstances, this simple ceremony among the descendants of these people became more complicated; the bridegroom sent all his friends and relations to the house of the bride’s father, who attended also with her relations, conducted her from thence to that of her future husband, being led by a matron, and followed by a company of young maidens. On her arrival, she was received by the bridegroom, who proceeded along with her to the church, where a priest performed the nuptial benediction. When the bride was a virgin, this was commonly done beneath a large canopy, to save her blushes: when a widow, it was thought unnecessary. Among the Franks, instead of the church, marriages were to be performed in a full court, where a buckler had been three times lifted up, and three causes at least openly tried: otherwise it was not valid. When it was done in the church, the priest afterward crowned the young couple with flowers: and in this manner they went home, and spent the afternoon in drinking and dancing; and at night, the whole of the company having seen the

bridegroom and bride in bed together, drank to them, and retired.

It is a melancholy truth, that the improvement of society improves also the arts of fraud and of cunning, and renders a far greater number of laws and of ceremonies necessary, in order to bind mankind to good faith and duty, than are among the less cultivated part of the species. This is one reason why the ceremonies of marriage were obliged to be made more solemn and binding; but besides this, there are others not less powerful. The laws of Moses, as well as those of almost all antiquity, had given to the men a liberty of polygamy, of concubinage, and had made divorces a matter of the greatest facility: hence the yoke of matrimony to them not only felt light, but was easily shaken off. But the introduction of Christianity brought with it laws of a different nature; it destroyed all these privileges, and having joined only one man and one woman together, required the same absolute and unconditional fidelity from both, and bound the yoke of matrimony so hard upon them, that death only could break it. Hence the men not only violated their faith to their wives in secret, but, when opportunity offered, also denied their marriage; and hence religion was at first called in to overawe the conscience, and make the compact more solemn.

We have already mentioned, that the first celebration of marriage by priests was among the ancient Romans; and as the Christian religion was almost at its very origin introduced into Rome, from them the Christian priests, perhaps, borrowed the custom of celebrating marriages also. But it was some ages before mankind began to consider those as the only legal marriages, which were solemnized by a

priest, or before the priests themselves thought of appropriating this privilege entirely to their order. The Franks and some other Christians were married in their courts of justice, by their relations or magistrates. Whether Christian priests first performed the ceremonies of marriage, with a view to give an additional solemnity to them, and, by so doing, to induce the parties more strictly to observe their obligations, or with a view to add to the importance and revenues of the church, is at this period uncertain. But however that be, Soter, the fifteenth bishop who had filled St. Peter's Chair (for they had scarcely then assumed the name and authority of Popes,) finding that the appropriation of marriage solely to the clergy was likely to bring in no inconsiderable revenue, ordained, that no woman should be deemed a lawful wife, unless formally married by the priest, and given away by her parents.—Though this was a great innovation on the ancient customs, and perhaps encroachment on the right of civil power, we do not find that any resistance was made to it at Rome. In other parts of the Christian world, however, where the successor of St. Peter had less influence, parents and magistrates still continued to exert the power of marrying; but this power seems, in process of time, to have been almost entirely wrested out of their hands, especially in R. Catholic countries, where the clergy were obliged to make marriage a sacrament, in order to keep the profane laity entirely from administering it; but at what time they fell upon this expedient is not certainly known.

Among nations which had shaken off the authority of the church of Rome, the priests still retained almost an exclusive power of joining men and women together in marriage. This appears rather, how-

ever, to have been by the tacit consent of the civil power, than from any defect in its right and authority; for in the time of Oliver Cromwell, marriages were solemnized frequently by the justices of the peace; and the clergy neither attempted to invalidate them, nor to make the children proceeding from them illegitimate; and when the province of New England was first settled, one of the earliest laws of the colony was, that the power of marrying should belong to the magistrates. How different was the case with the first French settlers in Canada! For many years a priest had not been seen in that country, and a magistrate could not marry: the consequence was natural; men and women joined themselves together as husband and wife, trusting to the vows and promises of each other. Father Charlevoix, a Jesuit, at last travelling into those wild regions, found many of the simple, innocent inhabitants living in that manner; with all of whom he found much fault, enjoined them to do penance, and afterwards married them. After the Restoration, the power of marrying again reverted to the clergy. The magistrate, however, had not entirely resigned his right to that power; but it was by a late act of parliament entirely surrendered to them, and a penalty annexed to the solemnization of it by any other person whatever.

Whence it originated is not easy to say, but a notion pretty generally prevails in this and several other countries, that the clergy, and they only, are vested with a power from heaven, of licensing men and women to come together for the purposes of propagation;* whereas nothing can be more evident,

* This was not the only right usurped by the clergy in the middle ages; there were a variety of others. No man was

than that the two sexes being made for each other, have from nature, the right of coming together for this purpose, and of disposing of themselves to each other; so that a clergyman, in performing a marriage ceremony, does not confer any right or privilege on the parties, which they had not before, but only in a public manner, and as appointed by the legislature of his country, witnesses and authenticates the public declaration they make of having entered into a matrimonial agreement according to the laws and customs of that country; to which bargain or agreement, this solemn and public authentication obliges the parties to stand, and becomes their security for the fidelity of each other: thus, whether the marriage ceremony be performed as it now is in most parts of the Christian world, by a clergyman, or, as it formerly was, and still is in many parts of the globe, by a civil magistrate; neither the act of the clergyman, nor of the magistrate, convey any right, but only enter on public record, the recognizance of such parties entering with mutual consent on the exercise of a right they have by nature; in the same manner, as when an heir at law succeeds to an estate, the ceremonies customary in the country where he resides at entering him heir, do not convey to him any new right to that estate, but only publicly declare and manifest to his country, that he has entered on the use of that estate by virtue of his inherent right as heir to it by nature.

lowed Christian burial who had not, according to his circumstances, bequeathed something to the church. A new-married couple were not allowed to go to bed together for the first three nights, unless they paid the church for a dispensation. In short, a man could neither come into the world, continue in it, nor go out of it, without being laid under contribution by the clergy.

There are many people, and particularly of our fair readers, who imagine, that if marriage were only considered as a civil ceremony, it would lose much of its validity; but a little reflection will discover this to be an error. When two or more people make an agreement to do such and such offices, and to abstain from the doing of others, if they take an oath, on the Bible, on the Koran, or the Talmud, at the altar, or in the open field, the oath is not by any of these additional circumstances rendered more or less binding, unless to superstitious minds; its force and obligatory power is derived from another source: from our ideas of moral rectitude and fidelity, and its obligation upon us would be as strong, and a breach of it as immoral and dishonourable, if we made it in our closet, as if before witnesses, and in any of the methods we have mentioned. Every person whose mind is not warped by superstition, considers himself to be as firmly bound by a civil as a religious oath, and with an equal degree of conscientiousness performs what he swore to, at the bar, as at the altar; and were this not the case, we should either be obliged to call in the aid of religion to every kind of obligation, or to put an end to all mutual trust and confidence in every civil transaction. Marriage, therefore, stands exactly in the same light as all other transactions of a nature interesting to the public, it is not allowed that every one should enter into it according to his own whim and caprice, but according to all the forms and ceremonies prescribed by the laws of this country. In Japan, she is only a lawful wife who is given by their great regal pontiff. By the laws of Mahomet, she is only so, who is married by the judge; and in a great many parts of the world, she cannot be so unless given by her parents.

Marriage is a word which, in different countries, admits of a very different signification; among the greatest part of the ancients, it implied a sort of a bargain entered into by one man and several women, that they should serve and obey him, and be liable to be turned off at his pleasure; in the East it implies nearly the same thing at this day: in the Greek islands, and a variety of other places, it signifies a temporary agreement between a man and a woman to cohabit together so long as they can agree or find it convenient. On the coast of Guinea, and in almost all savage countries, it is a legal method of condemning women to be the slaves of their husbands, who consider them only as made to earn their subsistence, and rear their children. In Europe, it is a mutual and almost indissoluble agreement between one man and one woman, to live and cohabit together for life, and abide by one another in every circumstance of prosperous or adverse fortune.

But Europe is not the only country where marriages are for life; they are so wherever men are polished by society, and the marriage rites and ceremonies in such places generally have a regard to the liberties and privileges of the woman as well as of the man. But in countries little civilized, and where the sex, from the cradle to the grave, are slaves to their parents, relations, or husbands, the marriage ceremonies are for the most part somewhat expressive of that abject condition. There are, however, many exceptions to these general rules, and the marriage ceremonies in many countries seem to have been contrived with no other view, than to make the marriage publicly known, by exhibiting some pompous rite in the presence of a great number of people, which indeed, besides the private engagements of

the parties, is all that can reasonably be wanted in any marriage agreement whatever.

Over the greater part of Europe, and in countries peopled by European colonies, the marriage ceremony expresses the duty of the parties, as well as their interests, and the regard they ought to have for the happiness of each other; and the general laws of the country, as well as the particular stipulations of the matrimonial bargain, take care of the freedom and immunities of the woman, and will neither suffer her person nor property to be abused by the arbitrary will of a husband.* But we have already seen, that among the Jews, and other ancient nations, the laws securing either the persons or property of married women were but few and weak, and that both were too much left at the mercy of their husbands. The same matrimonial powers are vested in the husbands of Asia and Africa at this day. The Moguls, who marry as many women as they please, have their wives of several different ranks, and may always advance any of them to one of the higher ranks, or degrade them to one of the lower at pleasure. In Russia, it was formerly a part of the marriage ceremony for the bride to present the bridegroom with a whip, made with her own hands, in token of subjection; among the savages of Canada, a strap, a kettle, and a faggot, are put into the bride's apartment as symbols of her submission and slavery; in the island of Java, the bride washes the bridegroom's feet; on the coast of Gui-

* The Russians were formerly accustomed to use their wives with the most relentless severity; to remedy which, the husband has of late subjected himself, by his marriage contract, to certain penalties if he used his wife ill, either by manual correction, whipping, boxing, kicking, or scratching.

nea, the bride solemnly vows love and constancy, whatever usage or returns she may meet with from her husband.

To these instances, we might add many others, where the marriage ceremonies are expressive of the condition of the wife; but we leave the ungrateful task, and proceed to take notice of those, where, on the part of the bridegroom, they express his acknowledgment of having attained something he esteems, values, and wishes to cherish and protect.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The same Subject continued.

THE customs we have just now related, are only to be met with among savages, or such as are a few degrees removed from that state. Those we now proceed to, mark a people either considerably removed from ferocity of manners, or far advanced in a state of cultivation and politeness. Among the ancient Peruvians, the bridegroom carried a pair of shoes to the bride, and put them upon her feet with his own hands. At Laos, the marriage ceremony is not only rational, but expressive of the value the bridegroom has for his bride; their mutual engagements are attested by two witnesses, selected from among those who have lived the longest and most lovingly together. In Siam, the bridegroom makes a present of betel to his bride, in the most respectful manner. In Lapland she is presented with brandy, rein-deer, and trinkets. In countries more civilized, a dower is settled upon her, and presents made her on her going home to the house of her husband. In England, she is treated with every circumstance of honour and respect, and the words of the marriage ceremony are carried to the most foolish and unmeaning length: "With my body I thee worship, and with my worldly goods I thee endow."—Much more simple, and at the same time more sensible, were the marriage ceremonies of the ancient Mexicans, and inhabitants of Ceylon, who tied the garments of the bride and bridegroom together, thereby signifying that they had bound themselves to

each other through all the prosperous and adverse circumstances of life.

But besides these ceremonies of marriage, which seem plainly to be expressive of the low or of the high condition of women, there are others which have no regard to either, and seem only calculated to give a public notoriety and firmness to the compact. Such is that said to have been anciently practised in Canada, where the bride and bridegroom held a rod between them, while the old men pronounced certain prayers over them, after which they broke the rod into as many pieces as there were witnesses, and gave to each a piece, who carried it home, and deposited it as a testimony of the marriage that had happened. Such is the ceremony of tying the garments publicly together, and such are those of inviting friends and neighbours to feast, and to be witnesses of the matrimonial engagements. As the natural modesty of the sex always supposes that a woman shall with some reluctance relinquish her state of virginity, the marriage ceremony is frequently expressive of this reluctance. In some countries, the bride hides herself; in others, she must seemingly be fought for; in others, the ceremony must be performed while she is covered with a veil, or under a canopy to save her blushes. But what seems more extraordinary, there are instances where the man is seemingly to be forced to accept of what almost in all countries he eagerly seeks after. In a province of Old Mexico, the bridegroom was carried off by his relations, that it might be thought he was forced into the state of wedlock, a state so perplexed with thorns and cares. In almost all countries, the day of marriage is dedicated to mirth and to festivity, and every thing that can cloud the brow, or damp the general joy, is carefully avoided. In

Muscovy, however, the case was different; as a part of the ceremony they crowned the young couple with wormwood, as an emblem of the bitterness of those anxieties and cares upon which they were entering.

If the laws we have formerly mentioned, forbidding the marriage of near relations with each other, originated from the political view of preserving the human race from degeneracy they are the only laws we meet with on that subject, and exert almost the only care we find taken of so important a matter. The Asiatic is careful to improve the breed of his elephants, the Arabian of his horses, and the Laplander of his rein-deer. The Englishman, eager to have swift horses, staunch dogs, and victorious cocks, grudges no care, and spares no expence, to have the males and females matched properly; but since the days of Solon, where is the legislator, or since the times of the ancient Greeks, where are the private persons, who take any care to improve, or even to keep from degeneracy the breed of their own species? The Englishman who solicitously attends the training of his colts and puppies, would be ashamed to be caught in the nursery; and while no motive could prevail upon him to breed horses or hounds from an improper or contaminated kind, he will calmly, or rather inconsiderately, match himself with the most decrepid or diseased of the human species; thoughtless of the weaknesses and evils he is going to entail on posterity, and considering nothing but the acquisition of fortune he is by her alliance to convey to an offspring, by diseases rendered unable to use it. The Muscovites were formerly the only people, besides the Greeks, who paid a proper attention to this subject. After the preliminaries of a marriage were settled between the parents of a

young couple, the bride was stripped naked, and carefully examined by a jury of matrons, when, if they found any bodily defect, they endeavoured to cure it; but if it would admit of no remedy, the match was broke off, and she was considered not only as a very improper subject to breed from, but improper also for maintaining the affections of a husband, after he had discovered the imposition she had put upon him.

In England, the marriage ceremony is not to be performed but in the church, and between the hours of eight and twelve o'clock in the forenoon. In Scotland, this is deemed incompatible with morality and sound policy, as it hinders the valetudinarian from doing all the justice in his power to the mistress he has lived with and debauched; he may therefore marry her at any hour, or in any place, and by that marriage, legitimate all the children he has by her, whether they be present at the marriage or not.—Nearly the same thing takes place all over Germany; only in some parts of it, the children to be legitimated are required to be present, to be acknowledged by the father, and to hold the lappet of his garment, during the performance of the marriage ceremony.

In Prussia, though their code of laws seems in general to be as reasonable, and as consistent with sound policy as any in Europe, yet we still find in it, an allowance given for a species of that concubinage, which has long since been expelled from almost all the western world. A man may there marry what is called a left-handed wife, to whom he is married for life, and by the common ceremony;* but with

* The only difference in the ceremony is, the bridegroom gives her his left hand instead of his right.

this exprefs agreement, that neither ſhe nor her children ſhall live in the houſe of her huſband, nor ſhall take his name, nor bear his arms, nor claim any dower or donation uſually claimed by every other wife, nor diſpoſe of any part of his property, exert any authority over his ſervants, nor ſucceed to his eſtates or his titles ; but ſhall be contented with what was agreed on for their ſubſiſtence during his life, and with what he ſhall give them at his death. This privilege, however, is always in the power of the king to deny, and is ſeldom granted to any but ſuch of the nobility as are left with large families, and from the ſmallneſs of their fortunes cannot afford to marry another legal wife, and rear up another family of the ſame rank with themſelves.

Though the laws of almoſt every civilized country have required the conſent of parents to the marriage of their children, yet when ſuch children marry without it, the evil is conſidered as incapable of any remedy. The Pruſſian law, however, thinks otherwiſe : and in this caſe gives the parents a power of applying to the conſiſtory, which ſeparates the parties, and obliges the man to give the woman a portion for the loſs of her virginity, and contribute to the maintenance and education of the child or children of the marriage. Promiſes of marriage to a woman, have, in all well regulated ſtates, been conſidered as ſacred, and the breach of them puniſhed by a variety of methods ; but the Pruſſian laws proceed in another manner ; they do not endeavour ſo much to puniſh the breach of the promiſe, as to enforce the performance of it, which they do by the admonitions of religion, by impriſonment, by a fine of half the man's fortune, or a certain part of what he earns by his daily labour ; or if he runs away to evade the marriage, by marrying the woman to him by

proxy, and allowing her a maintenance out of his effects.

Before we take leave of the subject of matrimony, it may not be improper to take a view of the oppositions that have been made to it ; oppositions which have arisen chiefly on pretence of religion, but which, when thoroughly examined, will, we persuade ourselves, appear to have been founded on a very different motive. The two sexes were evidently intended for each other, and “ increase and multiply ” was the first great command given them by the Author of nature ; but suppose no such command had been given, how it first entered into the mind of man, that the propagation or continuation of the species was criminal in the eye of heaven, is not easy to conceive. Ridiculous, however, as this notion may appear, it is one of those which early insinuated itself among mankind ; and plainly demonstrated, that reasoning beings are the most apt to deviate from nature, and not only to disobey her plainest dictates, but, on pretence of pleasing her Author, to render themselves forever incapable of obeying them.

As the appetite towards the other sex is one of the strongest and most ungovernable in our nature ; as it intrudes itself more than any other into our thoughts, and frequently diverts them from every other purpose or employment ; it may, at first, on this account, have been reckoned criminal when it interfered with worship and devotion ; and emasculation was made use of in order to get rid of it, which may, perhaps, have been the origin of eunuchs. But however this be, it is certain, that there were men of various religions, who made themselves incapable of procreation on a religious account, as we are told that the priests of Cybele constantly castra-

ted themselves; and by our Saviour, that there are eunuchs who make themselves such for the kingdom of heaven's sake.

However absurd it may appear to reason and to philosophy, it is certainly a fact, that religionists of various kinds had early got an idea, that the propagation of their species was, if not criminal, at least derogatory to their sacred functions. Thus the priests of ancient Egypt were obliged, by the rules of their order, to abstain from women, though in after periods they allowed them one wife; the priests of the Mysians likewise bound themselves to celibacy; and the priests of the Romish church, in times more enlightened by reason, still follow the execrable example, as if Heaven were pleased with every means of preserving the individual, and displeased with the means of continuing the species.

But not only the priesthood, but several other religious orders of both sexes, began to spring up, who vainly imagined to conciliate the favour of the Author of nature, by discontinuing his works.—The Egyptians and ancient Indians had communities of Cenobites, who are supposed to have lived in celibacy. Strabo mentions a sect among the Thracians that vowed perpetual abstinence from women, and were on that account revered for their sanctity. The Essenes, among the Jews, laid themselves under the same obligation. The Romans had their vestal virgins, who kept perpetually alive the sacred fire in the temple of the goddess of chastity, and were buried alive if they proved incontinent. The Peruvians had their virgins of the Sun, who were brought up in the temple of that luminary, and obliged to the strictest virginity, under the same penalty as the vestals among the Romans. Friga, the god-

deffs of the ancient Scandinavians, had alfo a temple where her oracles and a facred fire were kept, by propheteffes devoted to perpetual virginity. Some tribes of the ancient Indians reckoned virginity endowed with fuch a power, that their moft approved remedies were ufelefs and unavailing, unlefs adminiftered by the hand of a virgin.

Soon after the introduction of christianity, St. Mark is faid to have founded a fociety called Therapeutes, who dwelt by the lake Moeris in Egypt, and devoted themfelves to folitude and religious offices. About the year 305 of the christian computation, St. Anthony being perfecuted by Diocleſian, retired into the defert near the lake Moeris; numbers of people foon following his example, joined themfelves to the Therapeutes; St. Anthony being placed as their head, and improving upon their rules, firft formed them into regular monaſteries, and enjoined them to live in mortification and chaſtity. About the fame time, or foon after, St. Synclitica, reſolving not to be behind St. Anthony in her zeal for chaſtity, is generally believed to have collected together a number of enthuſiaſtic females, and to have founded the firſt nunnery for their reception. Some imagine the ſcheme of celibacy was concerted between St. Anthony and St. Synclitica, as St. Anthony, on his firſt retiring into folitude, is faid to have put his fiſter into a nunnery, which muſt have been that of St. Synclitica; but however this be, from their institution, monks and nuns increaſed ſo faſt, that in the city of Oriſe, about ſeventeen years after the death of St. Anthony, there were twenty thouſand virgins devoted to celibacy.

Such at this time was the rage of celibacy; a rage which, however unnatural, will cease to excite our wonder, when we consider, that it was accounted by both sexes the sure and only infallible road to heaven and eternal happiness; and as such, it behoved the church vigorously to maintain and countenance it, which she did by beginning about this time to deny the liberty of marriage to her sons. In the first council of Nice, held soon after the introduction of christianity, the celibacy of the clergy was strenuously argued for, and some think that even in an earlier period it had been the subject of debate; however this be, it was not agreed to in the council of Nice, though at the end of the fourth century it is said that Syricus, bishop of Rome, enacted the first decree against the marriage of monks; a decree which was not universally received: for several centuries after, we find that it was not uncommon for clergymen to have wives; even the popes were allowed this liberty, as it is said in some of the old statutes of the church, That it was lawful for the pope to marry a virgin for the sake of having children. So exceedingly difficult is it to combat against nature, that little regard seems to have been paid to this decree of Syricus; for we are informed, that several centuries after, it was no uncommon thing for the clergy to have wives, and perhaps even a plurality of them; as we find it among the ordonnances of pope Sylvester, that every priest should be the husband of one wife only; and Pius the Second affirmed, that though many strong reasons might be adduced in support of the celibacy of the clergy, there were still stronger reasons against it.

In the year 400, it was decreed in a council, that such of the clergy as had faithful wives should not entertain concubines, but such as either had no wives,

or were joined to unfaithful ones, might do as they pleased. In the year 441, it was decreed, that priests and deacons should either abstain from marriage, or be degraded from their office. This law seems afterward to have been a little relaxed, for in the year 572 one of the canons of the council of Lucense says, when a deacon is elected, and declares that he has not the gift of chastity, he shall not be ordained; but if he says nothing, is ordained, and afterwards desires to marry, he shall be set aside from the ministry; and if a subdeacon take a wife, he may be a reader or door-keeper, but he shall not read the apostles. In the year 633, it was ordained, That priests should live chaste, having clean bodies and pure minds; and the same council, as if it had been to shew how ill their statutes were observed, ordained also, That such clergy as had married widows, wives divorced from their husbands, or common whores, should be separated from them. In the year 743, all the canons against marriage seem to have been totally disregarded, as we find, that even those who were bigamists, or had married widows, might be promoted to sacred orders. In the year 1126, the notion of enforcing celibacy seems again to have prevailed; for in a synod held by pope Honorius, all the clergy are strictly forbid to have wives, and ordered to be degraded from their office if they disobeyed the mandate, a mandate which was renewed in the year following, with some additional threatenings annexed to it; and so warm were the fathers of the church in their invectives against matrimony, that some of them rendered themselves ridiculous by their intemperate zeal. St. Jerom expressly declares, that the end of matrimony is eternal death, that the earth is indeed filled by it, but heaven by virginity. Edward the Confessor was sainted only for the abstaining from the conjugal em-

brace; and many of the primitive christians, fully persuaded that every species of the carnal appetite was inconsistent with pure religion, lived with a wife as they would have done with a sister. Jovinian was banished in the fourth century by the emperor Honorius, for maintaining, that a man who cohabited with his wife might be saved, provided he observed the laws of piety and virtue laid down in the gospel.

The first canons against marriage were, it is said, only received in Italy and France, a proof that the inhabitants of these countries were either less sensible, or less tenacious of the rights of mankind, than their neighbours: when, or by whom the celibacy of the clergy was first introduced into England is not perfectly agreed upon, some supposing it was St. Dunstan who, with the consent of king Edgar, first proposed to, and pressed the married clergy to put away their wives, which all those that refused to do were deposed, and monks put into their livings; these monks, whose invention was always very fruitful in stories to advance their own interest, gave out, that all the married clergy who disobeyed the order of the saint were, with their wives and children, transformed into eels; and, as many of them resided in the Isle, now called Ely, it is said to have taken its name from that circumstance.

At a synod held at Winchester under the same St. Dunstan, the monks farther averred, that so highly criminal was it for a priest to marry, that even a wooden cross had audibly declared against the horrid practice. Others place the first attempt of this kind, to the account of Alefrick, archbishop of Canterbury, about the beginning of the eleventh century: however this be, we have among the canons a de-

cree of the archbishops of Canterbury, and York, ordaining, That all the ministers of God, especially priests, should observe chastity, and not take wives: and in the year 1076, there was a council assembled at Winchester, under Lanfranc, which decreed, That no canon should have a wife; that such priests as lived in castles and villages should not be obliged to put their wives away, but that such as had none should not be allowed to marry; and that bishops should not either ordain priests nor deacons, unless they previously declared that they were not married. In the year 1102, archbishop Anselm held a council at Westminster, where it was decreed, That no archdeacon, priest, deacon, or canon, should either marry a wife, or retain her if he had one. Anselm, to give this decree greater weight, desired of the king, that the principal men of the kingdom might be present at the council, and that the decree might be enforced by the joint consent both of the clergy and laity; the king consented, and to these canons the whole realm gave a general sanction. The clergy of the province of York, however, remonstrated against them, and refused to put away their wives; the unmarried refused also to oblige themselves to continue in that state; nor were the clergy of Canterbury much more tractable.

About two years afterward, Anselm called a new council at London, in the presence of the king and barons, where canons still severer than the former were enacted; those who had taken women since the former prohibition, were enjoined to dismiss them so entirely, as not to be knowingly with them in the same house; and any ecclesiastic accused of this transgression by two or more witnesses, was, if a priest, to purge himself by six witnesses; if a deacon, by four; if a sub-deacon, by two; otherwise

to be deemed guilty. Priests, archdeacons, or canons, refusing to part with their women, here styled ADULTEROUS CONCUBINES, were to be deprived of their livings, put out of the choir, and declared infamous, and the bishop had authority to take away all their moveable goods, as well as those of their women. This law, highly unjust and severe, was still more so in France; for a council held at Lyons in the year 1042, a power was given to the barons to make slaves of all the children of the married clergy. As the English clergy were still very refractory in the year 1125, cardinal Crema, the pope's legate, presiding in a council at Westminster with a view to enforce the papal authority, made a long and inveterate speech against the horrid sin of matrimony, in which he is said to have declared, that it was the highest degree of wickedness to rise from the side of a woman, and make the body of Christ; though it happened somewhat unlucky for the poor cardinal, that he was himself that same evening caught by the constable in the very situation he had painted as so sinful, and the shame of it soon drove him out of England.

In the year 1129, the archbishop of Canterbury being legate, a council was called at London, to which all the clergy of England were summoned: here it was enacted, That all who had wives, should put them away before the next feast of St. Andrew, under pain of deprivation. The execution of this decree was left to the king; who took money of several priests, by way of commutation, and so the intention of the decree was frustrated. Many of the clergy now finding a heavy fine imposed on them, for keeping a lawful wife, and none for a concubine, chose the latter; by such means their lives became so openly scandalous, that about forty-six

years after, in the reign of Henry the second, Richard, archbishop of Canterbury, in a synod held at Westminster, prohibited all, who were in holy orders, from keeping concubines, as well as from marrying. The like prohibition was issued afterward, by Herbert, archbishop of Canterbury, and then also chief justice of England, in a synod held at York. In the ninth year of Henry the Third, Stephen Langton revived these decrees; and added, That priests keeping concubines, should not be admitted to the sacraments, nor their concubines allowed Christian burial. But in spite of all these efforts, many of the clergy still retained their wives, concubines, and benefices, till cardinal Otho, some time after made a positive decree, declaring, That the wives and children of such priests should have no benefit from the estates of their husbands and fathers; and that such estates should be vested in the church. This, as it cut off the widows and children of the clergy from all means of subsistence, and turned them beggars into the world, had a more powerful effect than all the censures and thunders of the church; and at last gave the fatal blow to a right which the clergy had struggled to maintain for many centuries; and from this time they seem quietly to have submitted to the yoke, till the Reformation restored to them again the rights of mankind, which had been violently taken from them.

In this manner did things continue till the reign of Henry the Eighth, when dispensations to keep concubines became common to such priests as were able to purchase them; but lest this should be a bad example, they were enjoined to keep them privately, and never to go publickly to them on account of scandal. Some years after, a temporal law was added to the spiritual, declaring it felony for a priest

to marry ; or if married, to have any commerce with his wife ; or even so much as to converse with her ; or for any person to preach or affirm, that it was lawful for a priest to marry. This law was repealed the following year, though the canons of the church were still in force, and continued so till the time of Edward the Sixth ; when the authority of the see of Rome being thrown off, an act was made, by which the marriages of the clergy were declared lawful, and their children legitimate. Queen Mary, in the first year of her reign, repealed this act ; and in this state things continued during the reign of queen Elizabeth ; but in the first year of James the First, an act was again made, restoring to the clergy the rights of nature, and of citizens ; and the act remains in force at this day.

In this contest we have seen a long and severe struggle, between one part of the clergy, contending for the authority of the church, and another part, contending for the rights of nature. But why this authority of the church, and the rights of nature, should be so opposite to each other, is a point involved in much obscurity. It has been alleged, that the reason why the church enjoined celibacy, was, that the clergy having no legitimate offspring, might turn their whole attention to enrich and aggrandize that community only of which they were members. This, however, does not appear to be well founded ; for illegitimate children may engross the attention of parents, and engage them as strongly in providing for them, as legitimate ones ; as has frequently appeared in the conduct of the sovereign pontiffs ; and yet the church has at most but weakly exerted herself in preventing the clergy from having children of this kind.

In the human breast there is not a passion so natural, so prevalent, as that which attaches us to the fair sex. The Romish clergy are sons of nature; they are endowed with the same passions, and susceptible of the same feelings as the rest of her children. How then they should voluntarily give up the gratification of these passions, the pleasure arising from these feelings, seems, if it really were a fact, altogether unaccountable; but if we consider it only as a finesse, we may guess at the motives which induced them to it.

In all countries, and at all periods, the clergy, rather wiser and more cunning than the rest of mankind, have arrogated and secured to themselves privileges which were denied to all others. Thus the Romish clergy, no doubt, considered the enjoyment of the fair sex as a source of the most exquisite pleasure; but then, in the way of matrimony, this enjoyment was attended with many inconveniences and disadvantages, which they were willing to avoid: they therefore pretended, that persons so sacred as themselves, were forbid to enter into that state; but at the same time resolved to enjoy all the pleasures arising from the commerce with the other sex, without the expence of a family, or the chance of being tied to a disagreeable partner. To effect this it was necessary, first, to have access to every woman in private; secondly, to get into all the secrets of the sex; and, thirdly, to have places appropriated, where none but them and priests should ever be suffered to enter. In the celibacy of the clergy we may, therefore, perceive the origin of auricular confession; a scheme well calculated to promote their licentious purposes, as it obliged all the

women, under pain of eternal damnation, to discover every secret; and not contented with denouncing damnation on her who concealed any thing, it promised absolution, in the most full and ample manner, of every thing discovered. Thus threatened with the greatest of all evils, on the one hand, and so easy a method of escaping it, even after every criminal indulgence, held out on the other, is there any wonder that women were frequently prevailed upon to discover even those secrets which the sex most cautiously of all others conceal. When women had confessed themselves guilty of one or more faults of this kind, it was natural to think, that, without great difficulty, they might be prevailed upon to repeat them; and thus the crafty sons of the church were led to discover where they might make their attacks with the greatest probability of success; and they knew also, that if gentle methods should fail, they could in a manner, force compliance, by threatening to publish the former faults of their penitents.

Being by these schemes, secured of admittance to all the women, and possessed of all their secrets, which they, no doubt, communicated to each other, the next step was to secure themselves from interruption, when in private with them. This was easily accomplished; they had only to denounce the vengeance of heaven against the daring miscreant, whether husband, father, or lover, who should sacrilegiously disturb a holy lecher, while confessing his penitent. Thus being possessed of all the secrets of the heart, and secured in their privacy with the women, with nature and the passions on their side, and pardon and remission in their power; is it any wonder that the Romish clergy became so debauched, and so dangerous to the peace of society, that the French and German laity, jointly, petitioned the

Council of Trent, that priests might be allowed to marry, and that their petition should have these remarkable words? “ We are afraid to trust our wives and daughters at confession, with men who reckon no commerce with the sex criminal, but in wedlock.”

In the celibacy of the clergy, we may discover also the origin of nunneries; the intrigues they could procure, while at confession, were only short, occasional, and with women who they could not entirely appropriate to themselves; to remedy which, they probably fabricated the scheme of having religious houses, where young women should be shut up from the world, and where no man but a priest, on pain of death, should enter. That in these dark retreats, secluded from censure, and from the knowledge of the world, they might riot in licentiousness. They were sensible, that women, surrounded with the gay and the amiable, might frequently spurn at the offers of a cloistered priest, but that while confined entirely to their own sex, they would take pleasure in a visit from one of the other, however slovenly and unpolished. In the world at large, should the crimes of the women be detected, the priests have no interests in mitigating their punishment; but here the whole community of them are interested in the secret of every intrigue, and should Lucina unluckily proclaim it, she can seldom do it without the walls of the convent, and if she does, the priests lay the crime on some luckless laic, that the holy culprit may come off with impunity.

Such has been the opposition made by the clergy to the marriage of their fraternity, and such perhaps have been the causes of it; nor will it appear to any one who is acquainted with the history of the mid-

dle ages, that we censure too severely in so saying; besides, our censure is justified by the joint opinion of two mighty nations in their petition, a part of which we quoted above. The clergy never had any arguments of consequence to offer in support of so arbitrary a measure; that of Cardinal Crema, already mentioned seems to have been what they made most use of, and besides, they quoted the authority of St. Paul, who says, "He that marrieth doth well, but he that marrieth not doth better." They trusted most to papal authority, and dogmatical assertion; but even in the ages of ignorance all these were too weak to stifle nature; and men easily saw through the thin disguise, which the flagitiousness of their lives often threw aside without any ceremony; and besides, they blundered in making marriage a sacrament, and denying the administration of it to that part of mankind who were accounted the most holy of all others.

As we have frequently mentioned the concubinage of the clergy, we think it justice to take notice here, that, however infamous it became afterwards, it was towards the beginning of the middle ages a legal union, something less solemn, but nothing less indissoluble than marriage; and that though a concubine did not enjoy the same consideration in the family as a wife of equal rank, she enjoyed a consequence and honour greatly superior to a mistress. By the Roman law, when the want of birth, or fortune, prohibited a woman from becoming the wife of a man of family, the civil law allowed him to take her as a concubine, and the children of such concubine, both at Rome and among the ancient Franks, were not less qualified, with the father's approbation, to inherit, than the children of a wife. The Western church, for several centuries, held concubinage of

this kind entirely lawful. The first council of Toledo expressly says, That a man must have but one wife, or one concubine, at his option; and several councils held at Rome speak the same language: but so much were these indulgences abused, that they were at last obliged to abolish and declare them infamous in every well regulated state.

We shall now take our leave of the subject of matrimony, with a few observations on the causes of the frequent discords and uneasinesses which arise in that state. If the satirical writers and declaimers of the present age may be credited, married women have in general arrived at such a height of debauchery, that few marriages are tolerably happy, and fewer husbands without the invisible marks of a cuckold. We do not pretend to justify all the wives of the present times; but on comparing them with the past, we find the same clamours have always existed against them; and without pretending to any spirit of prophecy, we may venture to affirm, that they will exist so long as marriages are contracted solely with a view to the interest of the parties, without considering whether they are possessed of any of the qualifications necessary to render each other happy; a scheme by which, tempers the most discordant are frequently joined together, though neither of them are so bad, but they might have made good husbands and wives, if they had been matched with propriety.

But this is far from being the only reason to which we attribute many of the unhappy marriages of this country; the basis of them is laid and established in the education of our young women, as well as in the manners and customs of our young men. Young women, instead of being taught to

mix the agreeable with the useful, are early instructed to cultivate only the former, and to consider the latter as fit for none but maiden aunts, and other antiquated monitors : but this is not all, flattered by the men from their earliest infancy, they are never accustomed to the voice of truth, nor to that plain-dealing which must unavoidably take place in the married state ; constantly accustomed to see a lover accost them with the most submissive air, to find him yield every point, and conform himself entirely to their will, they consider themselves as oracles of wisdom, always in the right ; taught to form their ideas of the husband only from those of the lover, and the ridiculous notions imbibed from romances ; they enter into the married state fully convinced that every husband is through life to play the lover, and that every lover is the romantic being depicted in the novels which they have read,—ideal fancies and dreams, which must soon vanish in disappointment. Nor do the men act more wisely ; blinded for the most part by love, they consider the object of their passion as all perfection and excellence ; and when they come to be undeceived, as every lover soon must, remorse and chagrine sour their tempers, and make them incapable of forgiving the cheat they think imposed upon them, or behaving with that degree of gentleness with which the stronger sex should regard the foibles, and even some of the follies, of the weaker.

Every one who has been attentive to what passes in other nations, and to what happens here, before and after marriage, must readily agree, that nothing can be more certain than the truth of the old saying, Too much familiarity breeds contempt. In order to inspire and preserve respect, it is necessary for kings and other great men to wear ensigns of grandeur,

and to be attended with guards; for judges to be arrayed in the symbols of solemnity and wisdom, and for learned men never to be too free in opening the depth of their knowledge. The case is exactly the same with women, and they seem sensible of it before marriage, but insensible of it afterward; before marriage, we are seldom permitted to see them but in their gay and splendid dress, and in their most cheerful and lively humour; we enter not into the penetralium of their weaknesses; we discover none of their faults, and but few of their foibles: but after marriage, they precipitately throw aside the mask, in such a manner as to discover that they wore it only for conveniency; and an intimacy with them opens to the husband, views which could not possibly fall within the inspection of the lover; and hence his ideas of the same woman when his mistress and his wife, are so widely different.

In endeavouring to explore the sources of conjugal infelicity, we may likewise observe, that few men have so successfully studied the temper of women, as to be able to manage it to the best advantage. It has long been an observation of the fair, that a reformed rake makes the best husband; and we have known instances where women, after having made but indifferent wives to men of probity and virtue, who seldom committed any faults, have afterward made much better ones to rakish young fellows, whose whole lives consisted in sinning and repenting. The reason is plain; such is the constitution of female nature, that a little well-timed flattery and submission will seldom fail of putting them into good humour; whereas the most faultless and prudent conduct cannot always keep them in it. A woman, by the assistance of a few tender caresses, and protestations of future amendment, will frequently be

prevailed on to forgive ten thousand faults, if she is persuaded that her husband loves her in the intervals of his folly; but she will never forgive indifference, nor contempt. Hence many of the most learned and sensible men are reckoned the worst husbands, because they have more friendship than love, and more of both than they express; and many of the most wild and rakish reckoned the best, because they have more love than friendship, and express more of them both than they feel.

These, and several others too tedious to mention in sketches of this nature, seem to be the sources from which matrimonial infelicity so often arises; but would the parties come together with less exalted notions of each other; would they lay their account with finding in each other a mixture of human weaknesses as well as perfections; and would they mutually forgive faults and weaknesses, matrimony would not be so fraught with evils, and so disturbed with strife. It is the ox that frets who galls his own neck and that of his fellow with the yoke, while the pair who draw quietly and equally, scarcely feel it inconvenient or troublesome.

CHAPTER XXX.

Of Widowhood.

AS the state of matrimony is of all others the most honourable, and the most desired by women, so that of widowhood is generally the most deplorable, and consequently the object of their greatest aversion.

Women, by nature weak, are not able to defend themselves against the insults and outrages of man ; the same weakness incapacitates them for maintaining themselves either by the means of fishing and hunting, practised among the rude nations, or even by the pasturage and agriculture of those that are more polite : to launch out into trade and commerce would require, perhaps, more industry, and more steady efforts of mind, than are consistent with their volatile natures and finer feelings, and would, besides, expose them to many assaults, which even the severest virtue might not always be able to repel. On these, and a variety of other accounts, we find women commonly dependent on the men for the two important articles, maintenance and protection : while young, they are under the protection of their parents or guardians, who are likewise to provide for them, or at least to superintend the management both of their fortunes and conduct : when they enter into matrimony, they put themselves under the protection and guardianship of a husband ; but when they become widows, no person is henceforth so much interested in their welfare, no person is legally

bound to defend or to maintain them; and hence their dislike to that forlorn condition.

But there are other causes beside these, which strongly contribute to heighten this dislike. In the bloom of virginity, though a woman may not be very handsome, yet there is always in youth and the prime of life something in her that attracts the attention and procures the good offices of the men, and consequently the chance of a husband is considerable. But when a woman has been married, and is become a widow, she is generally past the bloom of life, and has lost, by the bearing of children and care of a family, a great part of those charms which procured her a husband; and on this, and several other accounts, is not so likely to succeed in getting another; and, as the sex have a strong proclivity to the joys of love, which matrimony only can procure them with reputation, we need not wonder at the readiness with which they enter into, and the reluctance they feel in quitting, that state.

Thus the condition of widowhood, in the politest countries, is attended with many disadvantages: in rude and barbarous ones, these disadvantages are still more numerous and more grievous. The sacred records, and indeed the history of all antiquity, give the strongest reasons to suspect, that widows were often the prey of the lawless tyrant, who spoiled them with impunity, because they had none to help them. In many places of the scripture, as well as of prophane authors, we frequently find the state of the widow and the fatherless depicted as of all others the most forlorn and miserable; and men of honour and probity, in recounting their own good actions, making a merit of their having forborne from despoiling the widow and the fatherless. In the book

of Exodus it is declared as a law, "That ye shall not afflict the widow, or the fatherless child : if thou afflict them in any ways, and they cry unto me, I will surely hear their cry ; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless." In the eighth century, one of the canon laws enacted, That none shall presume to disturb widows, orphans, and weak people ; all of which create a strong suspicion, that widows were often oppressed ; otherwise, why so many laws for their particular protection ? But to men who live in happier times, when laws extend an equal protection to all, and when humanity dictates finer feelings than those of triumphing over weak and helpless beings, such laws appear superfluous and unnatural ; and the causes of promulgating them can only be cleared up, by considering the manners and customs of the times in which they were instituted.

One of the most ancient of all the customs of antiquity seems to have been that of revenging injuries, or, as the scripture calls it, avenging of blood. In the dawn of society, the privileges of maintaining their property, and revenging the wrongs either done to that or their persons, were the rights of nature, and belonged only to individuals ; nor is it stretching the point to say, that this privilege, or law, was prior to Moses, and that he probably borrowed it from some of the neighbouring nations. By this law or custom, which seems to have been established among every people not thoroughly cultivated, when any person was killed, the nearest relation only was empowered to take vengeance on the murderer ; which vengeance he was at liberty to execute with his own hand : but as this could seldom or never be done but at the risque of life, it often happened, that a

widow or an orphan might be murdered with impunity, as there was no person so nearly related to either, as to venture his life in taking vengeance on the murderer; and as the public was not then so connected into a whole, as to discover that it suffered any damage from the loss of an individual. But besides this, as widows and orphans have not friends so nearly interested in their property, as women who have husbands, and children who have fathers; and as, among uncultivated people, that which is not defended by strength has hardly any barrier around it, widows and orphans, in the times of ancient barbarity, were liable to be frequently wronged, oppressed, and plundered. Hence the dreadful misfortune of being in any of these conditions; and hence, also, the superior virtue of not only resisting the temptation of plundering them, but of pleading their cause, in times when the exertions of humanity were but weak, and the temptation of acquiring even a little, exceedingly strong.

When we consider the manners and customs of the savage nations of our own times, we are presented with a picture nearly resembling that of the periods we have just now mentioned. There, as weakness is not protected by the laws, to be allied to powerful relations and friends, or to be joined in some formidable party, are its only securities against rapine and violence. To be thought worthy of the protection of such friends, or of such a party, it is necessary either to be able to share in their common dangers, or to be useful to them in some other manner. Widows and orphans are frequently incapable of either: hence, among such people, they are despised and neglected, if not plundered and devoured, by the hand of the oppressor; circumstances, which nowhere happen more frequently than

in Greenland; a climate so extremely barren, that almost the whole of their subsistence must be drawn from the sea; and when they cannot derive it from thence, as is frequently the case in stormy weather, then women, who are in general but little regarded, fall the first victims of famine. But should no such accident happen, widows, who are left without sons come to age and strength enough to fish, and catch seals for them, are always in the most deplorable condition; for the whole riches of a Greenlander consists in his little stock of provisions; and such is the barbarous custom of the country, that when he dies, the neighbours, who assemble to bury him, seldom or never depart from his hut, till they have consumed the whole of that stock, and left the widow to inhabit the bare walls. In so horrid a climate, and on so stormy an ocean, it is but little a woman can procure; she is therefore obliged to subsist by the cold hand of charity; in Greenland much colder, than where the blood and kindlier spirits are fanned by a more benevolent atmosphere, and warmed by a more resplendent sun. Hence it frequently happens, that the pieces of seals or of whale-blubber thrown to her, hardly sustain a wretched existence, or entirely fail; when, neglected and unpitied by all around her, she expires by hunger and by cold.

Among many of the ancients, widows were, either by law or by custom, restricted from having a second husband. Almost over all the East, and among many tribes of the Tartars, wives were supposed to serve their husbands as well in the next world as in this; and as every wife there was to be the sole property of her first husband, she could never obtain a second, because he could only secure to himself her service in this life. After the Greeks became sensi-

ble of the benefits arising from the regulation of Cecrops concerning matrimony, they conceived so high an idea of them, that they affixed a degree of infamy on the woman who married a second husband, even after the death of the first; and it was more than two centuries after the death of Cecrops, before any woman dared to make the attempt.— Their history has even transmitted to posterity, with some degree of infamy, the name of her, who first ventured on a second marriage. It was Gorgophona, the daughter of Perseus and Andromeda, who began the practice; a practice, which, though soon after followed by others, could not, even by the multitude of its votaries, be screened from the public odium; for, during a great part of the heroic ages, widows who remarried were considered as having offended against public decency; a custom to which Virgil plainly alludes, when he describes the conflict in the breast of Dido, between her love for *Æneas*, and fear of wounding her honour by a second marriage: nay, so scrupulous were the Greeks about second marriages, that in some circumstances they were hardly allowed to the men. Charonidas excluded all those from the public councils of the state, who had children, and married a second wife.— “It is impossible (said he) that a man can advise well for his country, who does not consult the good of his own family: he whose first marriage has been happy, ought to rest satisfied with that happiness; if unhappy, he must be out of his senses to risque being so again.”

Among some nations, as the ancient Jews, and Christians of the primitive ages, there were certain orders of men, who were not allowed to join themselves in marriage with widows. Every priest of the Jews was to take a wife in her virginity; a widow,

for a divorced woman, or prophane, or an harlot, these he shall not take; but he shall take a virgin of his own people to wife. And Pope Syricus, copying the example set by Moses, ordained, that if a bishop married a widow, or took a second wife, he should be degraded. It is somewhat remarkable, that Moses should have put widows on the same scale with harlots and prophane women: an arrangement which greatly degraded them, and which must doubtless have depended on some opinion or custom, of which we are now entirely ignorant. We are almost as little acquainted with the reason why the clergy of the middle ages were prohibited from marrying widows; for, besides the prohibition of Syricus, which only extended to bishops, the church afterwards issued many others of the same nature, which extended in time to all men in holy orders. In the year 400, we find it decreed in the Cyprian Council, that if a reader married a widow, he should never be preferred in the church; and that if a sub-deacon did the same, he should be degraded to a door-keeper or reader.

As the Egyptians were the first people who treated women with propriety, and allowed them to enjoy the common rights of nature, they were not even unmindful of their widows, but protected them by their laws, and allowed them a proper maintenance from the effects of their husbands. The Greeks, who derived their laws from ancient Egypt, likewise allowed their widows a dowry for their subsistence; but if they had any children, and married a second husband, they could carry to him none of the dower of the first. Among the Romans, when a man died intestate, and without children, his widow was the sole heiress of his fortune; and if he left children she had an equal share with them of all that

belonged to him. In the middle ages, when it was customary for creditors to seize upon and sell the wives and children of a debtor, they were not empowered to take his widow: the connection was dissolved, and she was no longer his property; though her sons and daughters were, and might be taken and sold accordingly. In the eleventh century, the church began to espouse the cause of widows, and required a promise from penitents, before she would give them absolution, that they would not henceforth hurt the widow and the fatherless. Among the Franks, it was customary to pay to the bride a small sum of money, by way of purchase: this sum was commonly a sol and a denier to a maiden; but to a widow three golden sols and a denier were requisite; because, all women besides widows being under perpetual guardianship, marriage made no change in the liberty of a maiden; whereas a widow parted with the liberty she had gained by the death of her husband, when she joined herself to a second.

The melancholy ceremonies of mourning have, in all ages and countries, been more particularly allotted to women, as the best fitted for them, not only by the sympathetic feelings, but also by their greater readiness in calling forth these feelings almost at pleasure. Widows, however, whether from a sense of the almost unspeakable loss they sustain by the death of a husband, or from some other reasons known to themselves only, have generally, in those solemn ceremonies, gone greater lengths than the rest of their sex. Jewish widows mourned the death of their husbands, at least for the space of ten months, and were reckoned shamefully abandoned, if they married again within that time. Almost every civilized people have in some degree copied this example; some allotting a longer, and some a

shorter time to the mourning of widows, and all agreeing to mark them with infamy, if they married again too soon. Most legislators, finding widows rather too prompt to enter into second marriages, fixed a certain time within which they should not marry. The Romans, contrary to the practice of all other nations, fixed the time in which widowers should marry. The Julians first allowed three years, afterwards but one. The Papians gave them two. In the eleventh century the church decreed, that a widow should not marry within the space of one year after the death of her husband. The laws of Geneva have shortened this period to half a year, and in most civilized countries it is more regulated by custom than by law.

It was formerly the custom in Scotland, and in Spain, for widows to wear the dress of mourners until death, or a second husband put an end to the ceremony. In the latter, the widow passed the first year of her mourning in a chamber hung with black, into which day-light was never suffered to enter: when this year was ended, she changed this dark and dismal scene for a chamber hung with grey, into which she admitted the sun-beams sometimes to penetrate; but neither in her black nor grey chamber did custom allow her looking glasses, nor cabinets, nor plate, nor any thing but the most plain and necessary furniture; nor was she to have jewels on her person, nor to wear any colour but black.*—

* We are so much accustomed in Europe to see mourners dressed in black, that we have affixed a melancholy idea to that colour. Black is not, however, universally appropriated to this purpose. The dress of the Chinese mourners is white; that of the Turks blue; of the Peruvians a mouse colour; of the Egyptians yellow, and in some of their provinces green, and purple is at present made use of as the mourning dress of kings and cardinals.

The faultless victim, is, however, immediately discharged from her gloomy prison, if she is lucky enough to get a second husband, and she frequently lays herself out for one, as much with a view to escape from her confinement, as on account of reiterating the joys of wedlock.

Among nations less cultivated, the idea of what a widow ought to undergo on the loss of her husband, has been carried to a length, in some respects, more unreasonable than in Spain. The Muskohge savages in America allot her the tedious space of four years to chastity and to mourning, and the Chikkahah dedicate three to the same purposes; this, however, on the part of the women is not voluntary, but complied with only to save them from the punishment of adulterers, to which they would be liable if they acted otherwise. To this mourning and continency are added particular austerities; every evening and morning, during the first year, a widow is obliged, by custom, to lament her loss in loud and lugubrious strains, and if her husband was a war-chief, she is also obliged, during the first moon, to sit the whole day under his war-pole,* and there incessantly bewail her loss in loud lamentations, without any shelter from the heat, the cold, or whatever weather shall happen; a ceremony so rigid and severe, that not a few in the performance of it, notwithstanding the natural hardness of their constitutions, fall victims to the various distempers which then attack them, and to which they are not allowed to pay any regard, till the ceremony is ended. This custom, according to the Indians, was institu-

* This war-pole is a tree stuck in the ground, the top and branches cut off, is painted red, and all the weapons and trophies of war which belonged to the deceased are hung on it, and remain there till they rot.

ted, not only to hinder women from taking any methods to destroy, but also to induce them to do all in their power to preserve the lives of their husbands. Besides this, there may be other reasons. It was anciently considered as one of the greatest of misfortunes to die unlamented; a circumstance which the sacred records, and the historians and poets of antiquity frequently allude to, and which is at this day a custom in many parts of the Indies, and exists also in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland, in some of the northern parts of which, nothing would more disturb a chieftain when alive, than to think that his funeral dirge would not be sung by his dependants when dead; perhaps, therefore, this long and painful mourning of the American widows was instituted to prevent the illusive evil of dying unlamented.

But this painful ceremony, and this long celibacy of the Muskohge and Chikkafah widows is not all that they are condemned to suffer; the law obliges them also, during the continuance of their weeds, to abstain from all kinds of diversion, and from all public company, to go with their hair negligent and dishevelled, and to deny themselves the enchanting pleasure of anointing it with grease or oil; the observance of all which is enforced by the nearest of kin to the deceased husband, who keeps a watchful eye over the conduct of his widow, because, should she fail in any particular of the duty we have mentioned, she would thereby bring the most indelible stain on the memory of the deceased, and the honour of his family. Through the whole of their widowhood, the women continue to mourn their lost husbands, and in their lamentations constantly call on them by name, especially when they go out to work in the morning, and when they return in the evening, at which time the whole company of maids and

and widows join in a melancholy chorus, making the hills and dales reverberate the funebral sound. Husbands, however, never weep for their wives—"Tears, say they, do not become men; it is only women that ought to weep;" and we may add, that in America they frequently have great reason so to do, for if the friends of a widow cannot find a husband for her, add if she has no sons of age to procure her the means of subsistence, her condition is but wretched and miserable; what little charity she receives is often given with an ill grace, and at last she is frequently in no small danger of perishing for want.

Such are the severities which mark the fate of widows among the savages of America; but hard as we may reckon all these unmerited sufferings and austerities, they are lenient and tender, when compared to what widows in several parts of Africa are obliged to undergo. In that country of tyranny and despotism, wives and concubines are not only doomed to be the slaves of their husbands in this world, but, according to their opinion, in the next also; the husband, therefore, is no sooner dead, than his wives, concubines, servants, and even sometimes horses, must be strangled, in order to render him the same services in the other world which they did in this. At the Cape of Good Hope, as widows are less esteemed than virgins, in order that they may not impose themselves on the men for such, they are obliged by law to cut off a joint from a finger for every husband that dies; this joint they present to their new husband on the day of their marriage. In the Isthmus of Darien, both sexes were formerly obliged to observe this custom, that none of them might impose themselves on each other for what they were not; or according to some authors, which is

not less probable, it was their marriage ceremony, by which they were affianced to each other. We have already seen that widows are in several places neglected, and allowed at least to fall a prey to famine; but in Darien, the barbarity is carried much farther; when a widow dies, such of her children as are too young to provide subsistence for themselves are buried with her in the same grave, no one being willing to take the charge of them, and the community not being so far ripened as to discover that the loss of every individual is a loss to the state. Such is the savage barbarity of African and American policy; a barbarity which can only be exceeded by what we are going to relate of the Hindoos, or ancient inhabitants of the banks of the Ganges, and some other parts of the East Indies.

Besides the remarkable custom of making every woman a prisoner for life, the Asiatics present us with still more extraordinary, and, if possible, more repugnant to human nature. The Hindoos do not bury their dead after the manner of many other nations, but burn their bodies upon a large pile of wood erected for the purpose; upon this pile the most beloved wife, and in some places it is said, all the wives of great men are obliged to devote themselves to the flames which consume the body of their husbands.

This cruel and inhuman custom having existed among them from the remotest antiquity, its origin is dark and uncertain, though they generally give the following account of it. The Hindoo wives having in ancient times become so wicked and abandoned, as to make a common practice of poisoning their husbands whenever they displeased them; several methods were in vain attempted to remedy the

evil, when at last the men found themselves under a necessity of enacting a law, That every Hindoo wife should be burned to death on the funeral pile of her dead husband; a most effectual, though dreadful, remedy to prevent the most horrid of crimes. If there is any truth in this cause, and the law which was the consequence of it, it has to some seemed strange that obedience to that law was not enforced by any penalty; but this is not in the least strange or unaccountable, for it would be absurd to enforce the execution of a law by a penalty, when no penalty could be devised so dreadful as the execution of the law itself. The Hindoos took a more effectual method, they did not drag the victims to the pile like criminals to execution, but prevailed upon them to offer themselves to it of their own accord; in the first place, by annexing to such a sacrifice all the most glorious and incomprehensible rewards of religion; and in the second, by subjecting the refusal to perpetual infamy, by degrading the woman from her tribe, and considering her as bringing an eternal disgrace on her family.

As there is no positive proof, however, that this was the origin of the burning of widows, others have supposed, that the custom arose in the following manner. At the death of Brama, the great prophet and lawgiver of the Hindoos, his wives, inconsolable for so great a loss, resolved not to survive him, and therefore voluntarily sacrificed themselves on the funeral pile: the wives of the chief Rajahs, or officers of state, unwilling to have their love and fidelity reckoned less than the wives of Brama, followed in a kind of brave the example set them by those wives. The Bramins, or priests of Brama, foreseeing that it would turn out advantageous to their society, extolled the new invented piety,

and declared that the spirits of those heroines from thenceforth desisted from being transmigrated into other bodies, and immediately entered into the first bhoobun of purification;* a reward so glorious, which put an end to the spirit passing a long and disagreeable state of probation, in the bodies of a variety of inferior animals, induced even the wives of the Bramins themselves to claim a right of sacrificing their bodies in this manner. The wives of all the Hindoos caught the enthusiastic contagion, and thus in a short time the frantic heroism of a few women brought on a general custom; the Bramins sanctified it by religion, and thereby established it on a foundation that several thousand years have not been able to destroy.

As the Bramins receive considerable emoluments from the burning of widows, being intitled to all the finery in which they are adorned before they ascend the funeral pile, they take care to interweave into their education an idea of its necessity, and from their earliest youth instruct them to consider this catastrophe as the most pleasing to Brama, and the most beneficial to themselves and their children. When they become wives, the same unwearied efforts are continued to confirm their minds in the principles so early inculcated; all the enthusiasm of religion, and all the ardour arising in the human mind from glory, are kindled up into a blaze; all the abhorrence starting up against degradation; shame and infamy are likewise conjured up to exert themselves. The woman is told, from the Shaster,

* According to the Bramins there are fourteen bhoobuns or spheres, seven above the earth, for the reception of the spirits of the blessed, and seven below it, for the reception of those who are condemned to further misery and punishment, till they arrive at the necessary degree of purification.

their fountain of infallible truth, that she who burns with the body of her husband shall enjoy life eternal with him in Heaven; that the children descended of a mother thus voluntarily sacrificed, acquire thereby an additional lustre, are courted in marriage by the most honourable of their cast, and even sometimes advanced to a cast superior to that in which they were born; that she who dastardly declines to ascend the funeral pile, is degraded from her cast, thrown out of all society, and by every one contemned and despised; her children too, degraded and buffeted, feel the effects of her crime, and become with herself the detestation even of the lowest and most despicable of mankind.

In whatever light we view this custom, or from whatever source we derive its origin, it is certainly one of the most extraordinary that we are presented with in history; several authors, and among them *Monf. Voltaire*, have mentioned it as the highest effort of fortitude and resolution, that a woman, in the bloom of youth and beauty, should not only voluntarily relinquish life, but calmly and intrepidly kindle, and afterwards ascend the pile whose flames are to devour her. Of this calmness and intrepidity there may, perhaps, be, or rather there appear to be, some instances: but even these are not so numerous as we are taught to believe; for a variety of authors tell us, and indeed their testimony is most consonant to human nature, that the greater part, if not all of the victims who devote themselves in this manner, are previously rendered insensible by opium and other soporific drugs. Besides, when we attentively consider an action so repugnant to self-preservation, the strongest of all human principles, we shall find, that though the victims really offer themselves, yet the sacrifice is not altogether voluntary;

it is an act to which the mind is forced to give consent, by hopes of the highest rewards, and fears of the most dreadful punishments; and to constitute a voluntary act, it is evident the mind must not be influenced by either.

It may, perhaps, be alleged here, that no motives whatever are sufficient to influence the human mind to relinquish life, and far less to meet death when armed with such ten-fold terrors; but this is not really the case; there are two motives of a nature so powerful, that either of them have frequently enabled both men and women to undervalue life, and set death and all his terrors at defiance. The first of these is Religion; almost every religion has been persecuted, and that persecution has constantly been productive of martyrs, who, influenced by the glorious rewards which they fancied annexed to their sufferings, and terrified by the punishments they should incur by declining to suffer, have behaved in death with a courage and magnanimity equal, if not superior to the Hindoo women. The second is the delusive phantom Honour, whose empty name drags the soldier to the field of blood, prompts him to scale the offensive wall, and meet the death planted there in ten thousand terrible shapes; where, if he perishes, the honour he sought after will not enter with him into, nor reward him, in the other world. These motives which, when acting singly, are each of them so powerful, both combine together to lead the Hindoo women to the funeral pile; and what gives them an additional force is, the education of the women, who are from their infancy trained up to consider this world as their place of punishment, their bodies as their prisons, and the final release from both as the undoubted commencement of the most certain and perfect happiness. Less tenacious,

therefore, of life than people educated and instructed in different and more doubtful principles, they submit, though not altogether in a voluntary manner, yet with less reluctance than is natural with us, to this sacrifice, which they consider not only as releasing them from all farther transmigrations, but as joining them for ever to the happy spirits of their departed husbands, in a state of the most perfect purification.

But this custom of burning has not been altogether confined to women; several Indian philosophers, through an excess of fanaticism, or chagrined with the ills and accidents of life, have flung themselves into the devouring flames, and there expired in seeming tranquility. The latest instance, perhaps, of this was Calanus, who followed Alexander in his expedition to India; he had lived free from pain and sickness to the age of eighty-three, when being seized with a violent cholic, and perhaps loaded with the infirmities of age, he took the resolution of freeing himself from the whole by the funeral pile; a resolution which he executed in spite of all the remonstrances of his royal master and other friends. We would naturally suppose that a nation in which both men and women were so regardless of life, should be brave and warlike, yet the contrary has always been the case, they have yielded and easy conquest almost to every invader.

But to return to the women. In spite of the care of the Bramins, in spite of all the glorious rewards offered to those who burn, and indignant punishments threatened against those who do not, nature will often revolt at death, and prefer even a life of ignominy to an exit attended with all the flattering ideas of honour and felicity. We are encour-

raged to assert this, because a gentleman, who has been present at many of these executions, declares, that in some of the victims he observed a dread and reluctance, which strongly spoke their having repented of their fatal resolution. But too late; for Vistnu is waiting for the spirit, and must not be disappointed: when the woman, therefore, wants courage, she is forced to ascend the pile, and is afterward held down by long poles till the flames reach and destroy her; mean while her screams and cries are drowned by the noise of loud music, and the still more noisy shouts and acclamations of the surrounding multitude.

Some historians have of late asserted, that the custom of burning no longer exists in India; this, however, is a mistake; there are two recent instances of it transmitted by Europeans, who were witnesses of the transactions they relate. Of one of these, as being the most circumstantial, we shall give our readers an abstract. On the 4th of February, 1742, died Rham Chund, pundit of the Maharattor tribe; his widow, aged seventeen or eighteen years, as soon as he expired, immediately declared to the Bramins, and witnesses present, her resolution to burn. As the family was of great importance, all her relations and friends left no arguments unattempted to dissuade her from her purpose. The state of her infant children, and the terrors and pains of death she aspired after, were painted to her in the strongest and most lively colours; but she was deaf to all. Her children, indeed, she seemed to leave with some regret; but when the terrors of burning were mentioned to her, with a countenance calm and resolved, she put one of her fingers into the fire, and held it there a considerable time; then, with one of her hands, she put fire into the palm of the

other ; sprinkled incense upon it, and fumigated the attending Bramins. Being given to understand, that she should not obtain permission to burn, she fell immediately into the most deep affliction ; but soon recollecting herself, answered, that death would still be in her power ; and that if she were not allowed to make her exit, according to the principles of her cast, she would starve herself. Finding her thus resolved, her friends were, at last, obliged to consent to her proposal.

Early on the following morning, the body of the deceased was carried down to the water side ; the widow followed about ten o'clock, accompanied by three principle Bramins, her children, relations, and a numerous crowd of spectators. As the order for her burning did not arrive till after one o'clock, the interval was employed in praying with the Bramins, and washing in the Ganges : as soon as it arrived, she retired, and staid about half an hour in the midst her female relations ; she then divested herself of her bracelets and other ornaments ; and having tied them in a kind of apron which hung before her, was conducted by the females to a corner of the pile. On the pile was an arched arbour, formed of dry sticks, boughs, and leaves ; and open only at one end to admit her entrance. In this was deposited the body of the deceased ; his head at the end, opposite to the opening. At that corner of the pile, to which she had been conducted, a Bramin had made a small fire, round which she and three Bramins sat for a few minutes ; one of them put into her hand a leaf of the bale tree ; of the wood of which a part of the funeral pile is always constructed : she threw the leaf into the fire, and one of the others gave her a second leaf, which she held over the flame, whilst he, three times, dropped

some ghee on it, which melted and fell into the fire : whilst these things were doing, a third Bramin read to her some portions of the Aughtorrah Beid, and asked her some questions, which she answered with a steady and serene countenance ; these being over, she was led with great solemnity three times round the pile, the Bramins reading before her ; when she came the third time to the small fire, she stopped, took her rings off her toes and fingers, and put them to her other ornaments ; then taking a solemn and majestic leave of her children, parents, and relations, one of the Bramins dipped a large wick of cotton in some ghee, and giving it lighted in her hand, led her to the open side of the arbour, where all the Bramins fell at her feet ; she blessed them, and they retired weeping. She then ascended the pile, and entered the arbour, making a profound reverence at the feet of the deceased, and then advancing seated herself by his head. In silent meditation, she looked on his face for the space of a minute ; then set fire to the arbour in three places ; but soon observing that she had kindled it to the leeward, and that the wind blew the flames from her, she arose, set fire to the windward, and placidly resumed her station ; sitting there with a dignity and composure, which no words can convey an idea of. The pile being of combustible matter, the supporters of the roof were soon consumed, and the whole tumbled in upon her, putting an end at once to her courage and her life.

The other account, of a woman who burned herself, happened within these very few years, and differs from this, only in a few particulars : in this we are not told how the victim disposed of her jewels ; in it, they were given to the Bramins : this woman kindled herself the fire that was to devour her ; the

other had it kindled by her children: this sat by her deceased husband; the other stretched herself by his side. But these, and some others, are immaterial differences, and may perhaps be regulated by the customs of different districts.

From such scenes of horror, we naturally turn with abhorrence; and we are happy to say, that though the practice is not altogether abolished, by the authority and example of the Europeans, it is gradually falling into disuse, and cannot be executed without the leave of the governor; who grants it as seldom as possible: European authority and example, however, cannot prevail on the Asiatics to consider their women in a more liberal point of view; to treat them as companions and equals, or to release them from those prisons where they are confined for life. When such, therefore, is the general treatment of the sex, even while in all the bloom of youth and beauty, we are not to expect that such widows as do not burn with their husbands, are to experience much good treatment—when their youth, when their beauty, is no more; when they have failed in a point of duty, and of gratitude, reckoned so necessary; and have nothing, consequently, left to plead their cause but humanity, a passion scarcely alive among the people we are treating of, and whose feeble exertions, in many places of Asia and Africa, cannot rescue even the widow of a friend, or a brother, from being considered as the property of the relations of her deceased husband, and sold or condemned to labour for their profit.

Widows are not, however, in all parts of Asia treated in this indignant manner. In China, if they have had children, they become absolute mistresses of themselves, and their relations have no power to

compel them to continue widows, or to give them to another husband. It is not, however, reputable for a widow who has children, to enter into a second marriage, without great necessity, especially if she is a woman of distinction; in which case, although she has been a wife only a few hours, or barely contracted, she frequently thinks herself obliged to pass the rest of her days in widowhood; and thereby to testify to the world the esteem and veneration she had for her husband or lover. In the middle stations of life, the relations of the deceased husband, eager to reimburse the family in the sum which the wife originally cost it, oblige her to marry, or rather sell her to another husband, if she has no male issue; and it frequently happens, that the future husband is fixed upon and the money paid for her, before she is acquainted with the transaction. From this oppression she has only two methods of delivering herself; her relations may reimburse those of the deceased husband, and claim her exemption; or she may become a Bonzesse; a state, however, not very honourable, when embraced in an involuntary manner. By the law of China, a widow cannot be sold to another till the time of her mourning for the first expires; so eager, however, are the friends often to dispose of her, that they pay no regard to this law; but on complaint being made to a mandarin, he is obliged to do her justice. As she is commonly unwilling to be bartered for in this manner, without her consent or knowledge, as soon as the bargain is struck, a covered chair, with a considerable number of lusty fellows, is brought to her house; she is forcibly put into it, and conveyed to the house of her new husband, who takes care to secure her.

Though among the savages of America, though in Africa and in Asia, widows are treated in this

infamous manner, and their condition thereby rendered the most deplorable; in Europe the case is so widely different, that widowhood, when tolerable circumstances are annexed to it, is, of all other female states, the most eligible; being free from that guardianship and controul, to which the sex are subject while virgins and while wives. In no part of Europe is this more exemplified than at Parma, and some other places of Italy; where a widow is the only female who is free either to chuse a husband, or assume government of any of her actions; while, should a virgin pretend to chuse for herself, it would be reckoned the most profligate licentiousness; should she govern her actions or opinions, she would be considered as the most pert, and perhaps most abandoned of her sex. At Turin, the order of St Maurice are restricted from marrying widows; and yet at Turin the condition of a widow is, in point of every other liberty, preferable to that of a maid.

As we shall have occasion in the next chapter to treat more fully of the rights and privileges of widows in England, we shall not at present enter on that subject. Our ancient laws, and those of a great part of Europe, ordained, that a widow should lose her dower, if she married again, or suffered her chastity to be corrupted; and the laws of Prussia retain this ordinance to the present time. They likewise ordain, that a widow shall not marry again within nine months after the death of her husband; and that if a widow, while she is with child by a deceased husband, marry another, she shall be put into the house of correction; and the husband, if he knew her condition, put to work at the wheelbarrow for one year. Besides making a widow lose her dower when she enters into a second marriage, the Prussians have another regulation concerning

them, highly descriptive of the humanity and wisdom of their legislator. When a widower and a widow intend to marry, one or both of which having children, as it too frequently happens that such children are either despised or neglected, in consequence of the new connections formed, and perhaps of the new offspring raised up, the laws of Prussia provide for their education and fortune, according to the rank and circumstances of the parents; and will not suffer either man or woman to enter into a second marriage, without previously settling with the children of the first, and producing a certificate that they have done so from the judge of the district where they reside.

We have already related, that widows in some parts of the world are obliged to distinguish themselves by certain marks from the rest of the sex, that they may not have a power of imposing themselves on the men as virgins. The laws of Prussia carry this idea still farther; they reckon that the man who marries a widow, believing her to be a virgin, is so egregiously cheated, that they retort the evil on the aggressor, and render the marriage null and of no effect. We cannot pretend to describe particularly the ideas that the Prussians entertain of widows: they are certainly, however, much less exalted than those they entertain of virgins; as in their code of laws we meet with this remarkable sentiment: "The husband MAY present to his bride the morgengabe, or gift, on the morning after marriage, even though he should have married a widow." But though widows seem by them much less esteemed than virgins, they are not without several privileges. In some provinces, if there is no marriage settlement, and the husband dies intestate, they succeed to the half of all that was

the joint property of both ; but a privilege still more extraordinary, and neither reconcilable to nature, nor to sound policy, is, the allowing in some cases to a widow, eleven months after the death of her husband, to bring forth the child that was begot by him ; which, according to the Prussian law, shall be legitimate, provided nothing can be proved against the woman.

In almost all the other countries of Europe, the laws and customs, which regard widows, are little different from those concerning virgins, only in this circumstance, that they every where allow the widow to be mistress of herself ; while the maid and the wife are controuled by parent or a husband. They generally also secure to the widow a maintenance from the estates and effects of her deceased husband, and frequently devolve upon her in the important trust of bringing up her children, and suffer her to reap some advantages from board and education ; but such advantages are, for the most part, in the power of the father, who, by his will, may leave them to his wife, or to any other guardian he shall think proper to appoint ; for the laws of Europe do not consider the mother as the natural guardian of her own children, nor endow her with any authoritative power over them.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Of the Rights, Privileges, and Immunities of the Women of Great Britain; the Punishments to which they are liable by Law; and the Restrictions they are laid under by Law and Custom.

IN proportion as real politeness and elegance of manners advance, the interest and advantages of the fair sex not only advance also, but become more firmly and permanently established; the interests, however, and good treatment of the sex do not altogether depend on the advancement of politeness and elegance, for it sometimes happens, that a people rather less advanced in these articles than their neighbours, make up the losses thereby arising to their women, by good-nature and humanity. The French and Italians are before the inhabitants of Britain in politeness, they are superior to them in elegance, yet the condition of their women, upon the whole, is not preferable. Such privileges and immunities as the French and Italian women derive from the influence of politeness, the British derive from the laws of their country. Flowing in this channel, though they are perhaps accompanied with less softness and indulgence, they have the advantage of being established on a firmer foundation; and being dictated by equity and humanity, are less liable to be altered and infringed, than if they depended on the whim and caprice which influences gallantry and politeness.

Before we proceed to a particular detail of those laws which regard the persons and properties of the women of this country, it may not be improper to observe, that, taken collectively, and compared with the same kind of laws in other countries, they seem so much preferable, that we cannot help imagining that the same spirit which for many centuries has instigated the English to be liberal of their blood and of their treasure in support of those weaker nations who were oppressed by their more powerful neighbours, has also dictated the laws which regard that sex who are almost every where enslaved or oppressed by the other. It is true, the laws of several countries are in some particulars more favourable to the sex than ours. Those of Frederic king of Prussia, which regard the matrimonial compact, shew a greater indulgence to the women, and vest in them powers more extensive than those of England.—Those of France and Italy, as well as the customs which regard their personal liberty, seem more indulgent; and those of Spain, which regard their rank, and settle the deference to be paid to them, greatly exceed any thing experienced in this country. But these favours and indulgences are only partial, they only mark particular parts of their code of female laws, and do not uniformly extend their influence over the whole.

In considering the advantages and disadvantages in the condition of our women, we shall begin with the higher ranks of life. In France, the Salique law does not allow a female to inherit the crown; but in England a woman may be the first personage in the kingdom, may succeed to the crown in her own right, and in that case, not bound by any of the laws that regard women, she may enjoy the same powers and privileges as a king. Such a queen, if

she marries, retains the same power, issues the orders, and transacts the business of the state in her own name, and continues still the sovereign, while her husband is only a subject. But when a king succeeds in his own right to the crown, and marries, his queen is then only a subject, and her rights and privileges not near so extensive; she is exempted, however, from the general laws which exclude married women from having any property in their own right; she is allowed a court, and officers distinct from those of the king her husband; and she may sue any person at law, without joining her husband in the suit. It is high treason to endeavour to compass her death, and to violate her chastity is punishable in a much severer manner than the punishments for committing adultery with any other woman. She may purchase lands, she may sell and convey them to another person, without the interference of her husband. She may have a separate property in goods and in lands, and may dispose of these by will, as if she were a single woman. She is not liable to pay any toll, and cannot be fined in any court of law. In all other respects she is only considered as a subject, and on the commission of any crime may be tried and punished by the peers of the realm. A queen-dowager has privileges different from all other women of whatever rank; she remains still entitled to almost every right she enjoyed during the life of her husband, and even if she marries a subject, does not lose her rank or title; but as a marriage of this kind is considered as derogatory to her dignity, no man is allowed to espouse her without a licence from the reigning king.

Some of the other females of the royal family are also peculiarly distinguished and protected by the law. To violate the chastity of the consort of the

prince of Wales, or of the eldest daughter of the king, although with their own consent, is deemed high treason, and punishable accordingly. In former times, the king had a power of levying an aid upon his subjects, to enable him to defray the expence of marrying and giving a portion to his eldest daughter; but this power, which was frequently stretched into the most exorbitant oppression, declined with the feudal system, and has long since happily expired. As for the younger sons and daughters of the king, they are hardly otherwise distinguished by the laws from other subjects, than by having the precedence in all public ceremonies.

Besides the privileges annexed to the females of the royal family, there are some also enjoyed by peeresses, which are not common to other women. A peeress, when guilty of any crime, cannot be tried but by a jury of the house of peers; and if convicted of any crime within the benefit of clergy, may plead, and is entitled to an exemption from the punishment of burning on the hand, a punishment commonly inflicted upon people of all inferior ranks for such kind of offences. A woman, who is noble in her own right, cannot lose her nobility by marrying the meanest plebeian; but she can neither communicate her nobility to her husband, nor to her own children had by him: she who is only ennobled by marrying a peer, loses that nobility if she afterward marry a commoner, the law judging it expedient that marriage should have a power of degrading as well as of elevating her. She who first marries a duke or other peer of a superior order, and afterwards a simple baron, is still allowed to retain her first title, and the privileges annexed to it; for the law considers all peers as equals. In the scale of female rank and importance, there is a kind of inter-

mediate space between the peers and the commoner, filled up by the wives of bishops, judges, and baronets; all of which, though they share in the splendour and opulence of their husbands, have no title in consequence of the rank which these husbands enjoy: by the courtesy indeed of this country, the wives of baronets are called ladies, a title superior to that of their husbands, but at the same time a title to which they have no legal right, being in all judicial writs and proceedings only denominated Dame such-a-one, according to the name of their husbands. In Scotland the courtesy of the country is carried still much farther; every woman who is proprietor of any land in her own right, or is the wife of a man who is proprietor of an estate, great or little, is called Lady such-a-thing, according to the name of that estate: so that a woman is sometimes accosted with the pompous title of lady, who may almost cover the whole of her territorial district with her apron.

Such are the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the more elevated ranks of female life; but besides these, they are also entitled to all the other privileges and rights which the laws of this country have conferred upon women in general, and which we shall now more particularly consider.

As women are, in polished society, weak and incapable of self-defence, the laws of this country have supplied this defect, and formed a kind of barrier around them, by rendering their persons so sacred and inviolable, that even death is in several cases, the consequence of taking improper advantages of that weakness. By our laws, no man is allowed to take a woman of any rank or condition, and oblige her to marry him, under pain of imprisonment for

two years, and a fine at the pleasure of the king. But he who forcibly carries away an heiress, and marries her, even though he should obtain her consent after the forcible abduction, subjects himself to a still greater penalty, he is guilty of felony without benefit of clergy; and there is hardly any criminal whom the law pursues to death with more steady and unrelenting severity. Women are, on account of their weakness, and the better to preserve the modesty of their sex, excused from serving all kinds of public offices; and such as are under twelve years of age, which is the time fixed by the law for being marriageable, if forced into marriage, or even seduced to consent to it, may afterwards refuse to the husband the rights of matrimony, and have the marriage declared null and of no effect.

In no instance has the law exerted itself more strenuously, than in guarding women from rape and violence offered to their chastity. Their security in these respects has, in every well regulated state, been considered as an object of the utmost importance, not only as guaranteeing to themselves that liberty of refusal, which throughout the whole extent of nature seems the right of females, but also, as affording to the public all the security which the law can give, for the chastity of their wives, and the legitimacy of their children. We have already mentioned the punishments inflicted on the perpetrators of rapes in several periods and countries. In Britain these punishments have varied with the manners of the times, and the genius of the legislators. In the time of the Anglo-Saxons, he who committed a rape suffered death. William the Conqueror altered that punishment to the loss of eyes and emasculation, which disabled the offender from being again guilty of the like crime. Henry the Third,

considering these punishments as too severe, and finding that a power so extensive lodged in the hands of all sorts of women, was often abused from motives of resentment, and a desire of revenge upon those who had slighted or otherwise ill-treated them, ordained, that a rape, when not prosecuted within forty days, should only be considered as a simple trespass, and punished by two years imprisonment and a fine, at the pleasure of the crown ; and even when it was prosecuted within the forty days, the king reserved entirely to himself the power of punishing the offender. Having made trial of this method, and finding it was far from being sufficient to guard the fair sex from violence and insult, he at last made the commission of a rape, felony ; finding even this defence too weak, he, some time after, was obliged to make it felony without benefit of clergy. And so careful has the law been to secure all women of whatever character or condition, that even the most common prostitutes have in this case the same powers and privileges as other women.

In almost all other cases, whether civil or criminal, parties cannot be witnesses for themselves ; a woman, however, who is ravished, may give evidence upon her oath, and is in law not only considered as a competent witness, but may, by her sole testimony prove the fact, and deprive the aggressor of his life. In some measure to counteract the exorbitance of this power, and secure the lives of the men from being sacrificed to pique and resentment, the credibility of her testimony is left entirely in the breast of the jury, to be judged of from the tenour of her conduct, and the circumstances that occur in the trial. This power of being a witness in her own cause, in cases of assault, is not confined to such women only as are allowed by the law to be com-

petent witnesses in other cases, it is extended even to infants, and she who is under twelve years of age may be a competent witness against a man who has abused her, provided she has attained a sufficient degree of understanding to know the nature of an oath : nor does the privilege of the sex in this particular instance stop even here ; it is extended to a length unknown in most other cases ; if a man has been tried and condemned for a rape, and is afterwards pardoned, the woman may, by an appeal, have him tried again for the same offence. A married woman may sue her ravisher in any criminal court, without the consent or approbation of her husband ; and to sum up all, a woman may even kill a man who attempts to ravish her.

Such extensive privileges, vested in a sex so much guided by the impulses of passion, and so susceptible of the strongest and most implacable resentment, has by many been considered as a violent stretch of legal authority, whereby the balance of justice, which ought in all cases to be equal, is evidently made to preponderate in favour of the one sex, in prejudice to the other. But on the other hand, when we consider the weakness of that sex, the violence of ours, and the necessity which humanity and the rules of society lay us under of defending them ; when to these we add, the impossibility, in this case, of framing a law which shall answer the intention of the legislator, and lay neither of the sexes under any disadvantage ; and that much greater evils would arise to society, were women subject to the assaults of every rude invader, than from the powers with which they are invested, we cannot help thinking, that this law, as it stands at present, is, perhaps, the best that the nature of the case will admit of.

Besides these powers which are vested in the female for the protection and defence of her chastity, when she has suffered herself to be seduced from this virtue by fraud, or by the imbecility of human nature, the law confers on her another power, that of ascertaining, by her oath before a justice of the peace, the father of her child. In all other matters of litigation, whether civil or criminal, the person accused has liberty to bring an exculpatory proof: but here, as the nature of the crime is supposed to have stronger motives to wish for exculpation than the woman can have to give her child to a wrong father, no exculpatory proof is admitted, but such as renders the commission of the crime impossible. In Scotland the reverse of this is the case; there, the legislator considering it as an extravagant power for a woman to be able to oblige whoever she pleases to father her child, and confiding in the religious veracity of the man, has vested in him the power of exculpating himself; an unmarried woman with child is obliged to discover to the minister and elders of the parish, who is the father; they summon him before them, and if he denies it, he may exculpate himself by oath; this oath, of the most tremendous nature, in which he invokes all the curses of heaven to light on his devoted head if he swears falsely, is administered to him by the minister, in presence of the whole congregation; and is so replete with terror, that it is supposed very few men have had the temerity to venture on it, who were not innocent.—The church also assumes a power in Scotland of making every woman of whatever rank or condition, submit to certain penance, and declare the father of her bastard child, otherwise they deny her the sacrament; and if she continues obstinate, at last excommunicate her. In England, the church seldom interferes with the matter; nor have the church wardens

any legal right to carry a woman before a justice who is pregnant with a bastard child, unless she is likely to become chargeable to the parish; and even then, they cannot compel her to go before a justice, nor can he summon her before him, till at least one month after her delivery. We have just now seen, that the only punishment which the laws of Scotland allow of being inflicted on a woman for having a bastard child, is to make her do penance in the church. In England the church exacts no penance, but a justice of the peace may oblige her, if in proper circumstances, to defray some part of the maintenance of her child; and on refusal may commit her to the house of correction. Such are the laws which regard women who are settled in a place, and who, though they have fallen victims to seduction, or their own frailty, are not become absolutely abandoned; but a vagrant woman, when delivered of a bastard child in any parish where she is begging, may, by the order of a justice, be committed to the house of correction, and punished with whipping by the quarter session.

As licentiousness of manners, fickleness of temper, or a fraudulent intention of debauching a woman under pretence of marriage, frequently induce the more giddy or worthless of our sex, to address, swear, and make promises to a woman without any intention of marrying her; and as it is impossible in all cases for the sex to discover the real lover from the impostor; that they may not be altogether without redress when so cheated, the law of England ordains that when a man courts a woman, promises to marry her, and afterwards marries another, she may, by an action at law, recover such damages, as a jury shall think adequate to the loss she has sustained. In Scotland, it is said, she may recover one half of the

fortune he receives with his wife. On the other hand, as it sometimes happens, that artful women draw on the more fond and silly part of our sex, to make them valuable presents under pretence of marriage, and afterwards laugh at, or refuse to marry them : a man who has been so bubbled may sue the woman to return the presents he made her, because they were presumed to have been conditionally given, and she failed in performing her part of that condition.

Those personal privileges, and the few restrictions upon them which we have here enumerated, are chiefly such as regard unmarried women : we shall now proceed to relate some of the more peculiar advantages and disadvantages of those who have entered into the state of wedlock.

By the laws of this country, the moment a woman enters into the state of matrimony, her political existence is annihilated, or incorporated into that of her husband; but by this little mortification she is no loser, and her apparent loss of consequence is abundantly compensated by a long list of extensive privileges and immunities, which, for the encouragement of matrimony, were, perhaps, contrived to give married women the advantage over those that are single. Of all the privileges which nature has conferred upon us, none are so precious and inestimable as personal liberty. Men of all ranks and conditions, and women who are unmarried, or widows, may be deprived of this for debts contracted by themselves, or by others for whom they have given security; but wives cannot be imprisoned for debt, nor deprived of their personal liberty for any thing but crimes; and even such of these as subject the offender only to a pecuniary punishment must be

expiated by the husband. No married woman is liable to pay any debt, even though contracted without the knowledge, or against the consent, of her husband; and what is still more extraordinary, whatever debts she may have contracted while single, devolve, the moment of her marriage, upon the husband, who, like the scape-goat, is loaded by the priest who performs ceremony with all the sins and extravagances of his wife. It is a common opinion among the vulgar, that a general warning in the Gazette, or in a news-paper, will exempt a man from the payment of such debts as are contracted by his wife without his knowledge, but this opinion is without any good foundation; particular warnings however, giving in writing, have been held as good exemptions; but such are of little advantage to a husband, as his wife may always find people to give her credit, whom the husband has not cautioned against it.

So long as a wife cohabits with her husband, he is, by the laws of his country, obliged to provide her with food, drink, clothing, and all other necessities suitable to her rank and his circumstances, even although he received no fortune with her, or forces her to leave him by ill usage; he is also liable to maintain her in the same manner; but if she runs away from him, and he is willing that she should abide in his house, he is not liable to give her any separate maintenance, nor to pay any of her debts, unless he take her again; in which case he must pay whatever she contracts, whether she behave herself ill or well: when a husband forces his wife to leave him by cruel usage, she may claim a separate maintenance; but while she enjoys that, he shall not be liable to pay any of her debts.

As personal safety is of all other privileges the greatest and most valuable, and as weakness may often be exposed to danger when in the hands of power, the laws of this country have taken the most effectual method of securing the safety of married women. When a husband, from maliciousness of temper, or resentment, or any other cause, threatens, or actually beats his wife, she may demand security for his future good behaviour; and on application to any justice of the peace, such justice is obliged to make the husband find such security. And when a husband, conscious of having used his wife ill, will not allow her to go out of his house, or carries her away, or keeps her concealed, in order to prevent her endeavouring to find redress for the evils that she suffers, her friends may in that case, by applying to the court of King's Bench, obtain an order for the husband to produce his wife before the said court; and if she there swears the peace against him, she delivers herself from his jurisdiction, and he cannot compel her to go to live with him, but the court will grant her an order to live where she pleases; and should he attempt to force her to do otherwise, it would be a breach of the king's peace, by which he would be subjected to the penalties annexed to such breach.

When a wife is beaten by any person, so as to be disabled from managing her family affairs, the husband is by law entitled to such damages on that account from the offender as a jury shall think fit to give; but if an attack is made upon a man's wife in his presence, the law considers the attack as made upon himself, and gives him the same liberty of defending her that it allows in defending himself: nor does it stop at the attacks made on her person; if her property is in danger, he may repel force by force, and

the breach of the peace which happens on that account is only chargeable on the aggressor; but care must be taken that such defence do not exceed what is necessary for prevention; for if it does, the defender becomes himself an aggressor. Among the Romans, among several other ancient nations, and among some people in the present times, it is not deemed culpable for a husband to kill the man whom he surpriseth committing adultery with his wife. By the laws of England, he who should do so, would be reckoned guilty of manslaughter; but in consequence of the enormous provocation given, the court commonly orders the sentence of burning on the hand to be inflicted in the slightest manner.

As it is considered by the legislature as advantageous to population as well as conducive to the harmony of society, that every married couple should live together, the law ordains that no man take away a wife from her husband, neither by force, nor by fraud, nor by her own consent; and he who transgresses this order, is liable to a writ of trespass, or an action of ravishment, by which he shall be obliged to pay damages to the injured husband, and suffer imprisonment for two years: but this is not the utmost extent of the law, for it also intitles a husband to damages, not only against the person who actually takes away his wife, but also against him who entices or persuades her to live separately from him. The ancient laws of England are said to have been so strict in this particular, that when a wife happened to miss her way, the man who found her might not even take her to his house unless she was benighted, in danger of being drowned, of falling into the hands of robbers, or of being devoured by wild beasts; but a stranger might carry her on horseback

to the nearest market-town, or justice of the peace, there to remain, till claimed by her husband.

As the wife is not allowed to leave the husband, so neither may the husband abandon his wife; and if he does so, without shewing a sufficient cause, she may enter a suit against him for restitution of the rights of marriage; and the spiritual court will compel him to return, to live with her, and to restore them. But the law extends its privileges to married women still farther, and grants them immunities almost scarcely compatible with the rules of civil society and the public safety; if a wife commit felony in the company of her husband, it supposes she did it by his compulsion, and on that account absolves her from the punishment commonly inflicted on such delinquents: if a wife take away the goods of her husband without his knowledge, and sell them, neither the wife who stole them, nor the person who bought them of her, are considered as guilty of felony. A wife may receive and conceal her husband if he is guilty of felony or any other crime; for this action of concealment is only considered in her as self-preservation, an instinct which no law can take away or destroy. If a wife receives stolen goods into her house, and secretes them from her husband, the law will nevertheless impute the crime to the husband, unless he either divulges the matter to a magistrate, or leaves his house as soon as he discovers the crime. Though wives are thus far indulged by the law, yet they are not emancipated from the punishment it inflicts, when they commit robbery, treason, or murder, although in the company of, and by the coercion of, their husbands.

As a wife always is, or ought to be, the manager of her husband's family, she commonly has

servants under her care, whom she neither can compel to do their duty by force, nor defend herself against, should they be inclined to offer her any ill usage; the law, therefore, ordains, that if any servant or labourer assault or beat his mistress, he shall suffer one year's imprisonment, or corporal punishment, according to the nature of the crime. All women, whether married or otherwise, who are pregnant, are likewise peculiarly defended by the law; as every assault upon them, while in this state, does not only more easily endanger their life, but also the life of the child; every assault of such kind is therefore punished with more exemplary severity: any woman also, who is capitally convicted, whether married or single, may plead pregnancy in arrest of the execution of her sentence; and if she is really found with child, her plea will be sustained; for it would be highly unjust, that the innocent should be destroyed with the guilty.

Although a husband is, by the laws of this country, vested with a power over all the goods and chattels of his wife, yet he cannot devise by his will such of her ornaments and jewels as she is accustomed to wear, though it has been held that he may, if he pleases, dispose of them in his lifetime. A husband is also liable to answer all such actions at law as were attached against his wife at the time of their marriage, and to pay all her debts contracted before that time; but if his wife shall happen to die before he has made payment of such debts, the compact which made them one flesh, and binded their interests into one, being dissolved, the husband is thereby absolved from paying her antinuptial debts. A married woman may purchase an estate, and if the husband does not enter his dissent before the conveyance, he shall be considered as having given such

consent, and the conveyance be good and valid. A wife who is accustomed to trade, may sell goods in an open market ; and such goods a husband, by virtue of his authority over her, shall not have any power to reclaim. Even the feudal barons, and the church, which formerly laid her rapacious hands almost upon every thing, in several cases exempted the women : the baron could not claim a heriot or gift on the death of his female vassal, nor can any mortuary gift, at this day, be exacted by the church, on the death of a woman, of whatever property she was possessed.

No woman can lose any rank which she derived from her birth, by marrying the meanest plebeian ; but though descended of the lowest of the human race herself, she may by marriage be raised ; in this country, to any rank beneath the sovereignty. No woman can by marriage confer a settlement in any parish on her husband ; but every man who has a legal settlement himself, confers the same settlement by marriage on his wife. Though a husband and his wife are by the law considered so much as one person, that they are rarely admitted as evidence for or against each other, yet this rule has in some instances been departed from, even in cases not strictly criminal, and a wife has been admitted evidence to prove a cheat put upon her husband.

Besides the advantages we have now mentioned, to which every married woman has a right by the general laws of matrimony as they now stand in Britain, there are others which they may enjoy by private contract. It is no uncommon thing, in the present times, for the matrimonial bargain to be made so, as that the wife shall retain the sole and absolute power of enjoying and disposing of her own fortune,

in the same manner as if she were not married; by which inequitable bargain, the husband is debarred from enjoying any of the rights of matrimony, except the person of his wife. But this is not all: if the wife, too, were curtailed in her privileges, the bargain would be in some degree equitable: this, however, is so far from being the case, that it is quite the reverse; the husband becomes thereby liable to pay all the debts which his wife may burden him with, even though she have abundance of her own to answer that purpose; he is also obliged to maintain her, though her circumstances may be more opulent than his; and if he should die before her, she has a right to a third of his real estate and to whatever is customary for widows to have out of his personals; while, if she dies before him, he is not entitled to the value of one single half-penny, unless she has devised it to him by will. These are obvious disadvantages on the part of the husband; but, what is still worse, such a bargain overturns the natural order of things, and destroys that authority, which the gospel and the laws of this country give a man over his wife, and that obedience and subjection which the rules of christianity prescribe in the deportment of a wife toward her husband.

Such are the privileges and immunities which the women of this country derive from marriage, and which they enjoy from the moment that they enter into that state; but there are others of a posthumous nature, and these are only reserved for them if they survive their husbands. When a woman, on her entrance into matrimony, gives up her fortune to the power and discretion of her husband; or, perhaps, when she has no fortune, when, through a long and tedious course of years, she joins her own

management, labour, and industry to his; nothing can be more reasonable, than that she should be provided for, in case of his dying before her; and it would be a capital defect in the laws of civil society, to leave this provision altogether in the power of individuals, by whom it might frequently be disregarded or neglected, and the widows even of such husbands as had died in affluence, left to experience all the hardships of want and poverty; to prevent which the law of this country has wisely ordered, that every widow shall have a reasonable dower out of the effects or estates of her deceased husband, even though there was no marriage-settlement, or though, in such settlement, no dower was stipulated to the wife.

Dowers, as it is supposed, were first introduced into England by the Danish kings, and into Denmark, by Swein, the father of our Canute the Great, who bestowed on the Danish ladies this privilege as a grateful acknowledgement of their having parted with their jewels to ransom him from captivity, when taken prisoner by the Vandals. Dower out of lands was unknown among the Anglo-Saxons; for, by the laws of king Edward, the widow of any one who dies, is directed to be supported entirely out of his personal estate; but afterwards, a widow became entitled to a share in one-half of the lands of her deceased husband, so long as she remained chaste and unmarried; conditions which seem anciently to have been annexed to all dowers in this country; on a supposition, perhaps, that the dread of falling into poverty would be the strongest inducement to continence, and that if she married another husband, all the obligations which bound the estates and effects of the former to maintain her, from that moment ceased to exist. Such was the case for some time

after dowers were instituted; but these conditions were afterward only required of a widow, when her husband left any children, and in time they fell entirely into disuse; so that at present a widow may claim her dower, whether she is chaste and unmarried or otherwise; but no woman can claim her dower, who was not actually the wife of a man at the time of his decease: a divorce, therefore, from the chains of matrimony takes away all right to a dower; but a divorce only from bed and board, although for the crime of adultery, has no such effect. A woman who runs away from her husband, and lives with an adulterer, loses her right to dower, unless the husband is reconciled to, and takes her back. As every foreigner is by the laws of England, incapable of holding lands, therefore the wife who is an alien is entitled to no dower out of the lands of her husband. The wife of him who commits high-treason is entitled to no dower; nor the wife of an idiot; for an idiot, being incapable of consenting to any contract, cannot lawfully marry; and therefore all the rights which women acquire by marriage are nugatory in the case of her who is joined to an idiot.

Before marriage-settlements came so much into fashion, the dower which was settled by the law, or with which the husband endowed the wife at the time of marriage, was the only security she had for a maintenance, in case she became a widow. Respecting dowers, there are in certain places particular customs, which set aside the operations of the law in the districts where they prevail. In some places, custom allots to the widow no less than the whole of her husband's lands; in others more moderate, it gives her only the half, in others only a quarter. Anciently, the most common method of settling the dower of the wife was, by publicly

endowing her at the church-door, in the presence of all the company who were assembled at the marriage, with the whole, or such quantity of his lands as the husband thought proper to bestow. When the wife was endowed with the whole, we have some authorities to believe the husband made use of these words: "With all my lands and tenements I thee endow." When he endowed her with a part only, he gave a specific description of such part, that no doubt might remain as to its situation or extent; but when he endowed her with personal property only, then he used to say, "With all my worldly goods I thee endow;" a speech, which, being still preserved in our marriage-ritual, shews how fond we are of continuing forms, even after the reasons which gave birth to them are totally extinct.

The dower of a widow was formerly neither subject to tolls nor taxes, nor could even the king seize on it for a debt due to the crown; but this privilege, being found greatly to diminish the public revenue, was at last discontinued: at this day, however, the dower of a widow cannot be seized by the creditors of her husband; for it would be unjust, that she should not be entitled to an equivalent of her fortune, or a recompense for her labour and care, as well as the creditors to payment of their money. Besides the dotal right to a life-rent of one-third of the husband's real estate, which is commonly allowed by law, where the custom of the manor or place does not determine it otherwise, when a husband lends money in the name of himself and his wife, if the wife survive him, and there be enough besides this money to pay his lawful debts, the wife is entitled to it. No widow can be endowed out of copyhold lands, unless by the local custom of the manor, nor can she have any castle, or place of

defence, as her dower; for she is considered as incapable of managing it, so as to make it answer the purposes for which it was intended.

In the city of London, province of York, and in Scotland, the effects of him who dies intestate are generally divided according to the ancient doctrine of giving every one a reasonable share. If the deceased leaves a widow and children, the widow is first allowed the furniture of her bed chamber, and wearing apparel; then all the rest is divided in the following proportions: if the deceased left a widow and two children, the widow shall have eight parts (six by the custom, and two by law), and each of the children five (three by the custom, and two by the law): if he leaves a widow and one child, each shall have one-half; if he leaves a widow and no child, the widow shall have three-fourths of the whole, and the remaining fourth shall go to the next relation.

As dower, either by the common law or by the special custom of the place, was frequently considered by the contracting parties as too great or too little, the present times have hardly left any thing to run in that channel, the parties thinking it better to stipulate and agree between themselves on a specific quantity of land or money, which is, previous to the marriage, settled upon the wife by way of jointure, and which effectually takes away all her right to any dower. The jointure, thus legally settled, is still more inviolate to the wife than her dower; it cannot be touched by the creditors of the husband; and though a dower be forfeited by the husband being guilty of high treason, a jointure is not. Every jointure must be made to the wife, for the term of her own natural life; if made for the life of another per-

son, it is not legal, and she may refuse it, and claim the dower the common law assigns her. When a jointure is made before marriage, a wife cannot refuse it, and claim her dower in its stead, she having consented to it, while in a free and independent state; but if the jointure was made after the marriage, she may refuse it, and have a right to a dower, as she is then considered as having been obliged to give her consent by the impulse and coercion of her husband. If a husband settle upon his wife a jointure that shall be of a certain yearly value, and it falls short of it, she may commit waste, so far as to make up her deficiency, though prohibited from so doing in the deed of settlement; for it is but justice, that the widow should have to the full extent of what was intended her by her husband. The widow must have a right to enter upon her jointure immediately on the death of her husband; and if any subsequent period is fixed for it, she may claim her dower in preference.

In some parts of England there remains still a Saxon custom, called Borough English, by which the youngest instead of the eldest son succeeds to the estate of his father; and the widow, as guardian of that son, has the whole estate for life; by the custom of those lands called Gavelkind, the widow has no jointure, but succeeds to one-half of the lands of the deceased husband, and holds them so long as she remains chaste and unmarried. Before the time of William the Conqueror, when a widow married within the year, she forfeited her dower, or jointure; but that custom long since fell into disuse, and at present the law does not prescribe any time in which she shall not re-marry: custom, however, fixes a kind of stigma upon such as take second husbands, before they have dedicated a decent time to grief and mourning.

What we have hitherto mentioned respecting the women of Great Britain, has chiefly regarded those privileges and immunities which are established to them by law, or conceded to them by custom; but as this long list of privileges is, on the other hand, contrasted with many disadvantages, which are necessary, in civil society, to put the two sexes nearly on an equal footing with each other, let us turn to the other side of the picture, and take a view of these also.

The Salique law of France excludes a woman from governing the nation; in Britain, we allow a woman to sway our sceptre, but by law and custom we debar her from every other government but that of her own family, as if there were not a public employment between that of superintending the kingdom, and the affairs of her own kitchen, which could be managed by the genius and capacity of woman. We neither allow women to officiate at our altars, to debate in our councils, nor to fight for us in the field; we suffer them not to be members of our senate, to practise any of the learned professions, nor to concern themselves much with our trades and occupations; we exercise nearly a perpetual guardianship over them, both in their virgin and their married state; and she who, having laid a husband in the grave, enjoys an independent fortune, is almost the only woman who among us can be called free. Thus excluded almost from every thing which can give them consequence, they derive the greater part of the power which they enjoy, from their charms; and these, when joined to sensibility, often fully compensate, in this respect, for all the disadvantages they are laid under by law, and by custom.

As the possession of property is one of the most valuable of all political blessings, and generally carries the possession of power and authority along with it, one of the most peculiar disadvantages in the condition of our women is, their being postponed to all males in the succession to the inheritance of landed estates, and their being generally allowed much smaller shares than the man, even of the money and effects of their fathers and ancestors, when this money or those effects are given them in the lifetime of their parents, or devised to them by will ; for otherwise, that is, if the father dies intestate, they share equally with sons in all personal property. When an estate, in default of male heirs, descends to the daughters, the common custom of England is, that the eldest shall not, in the same manner as an eldest son, inherit the whole, but all the daughters shall have an equal share in it. Westmoreland, however, and some other places, are exceptions to this general rule, and the eldest daughter, there, succeeds to the whole of the land in preference to all the other sisters.

In some ancient states, where the women had attained a considerable degree of importance, the right of inheritance from an ancestor devolved equally upon the males and females. Among the Greeks and Romans, however, from whom all Europe at first derived the origin of its laws, the sons succeeded in preference to the daughters. In France, and every other kingdom where the feudal system was introduced, women were totally excluded from the inheritance of the feudal lands, because the baron, of whom such lands were held, required a military tenant, who should take the field with him when occasion required ; and women being incapable of this service, were also considered as incapable of

ſucceeding to ſuch eſtates as required it. This rule was ſtrictly adhered to in England for ſome ages after the time of William the Conqueror, who firſt introduced the feudal ſyſtem among us; but in proceſs of time, when it became cuſtomary to levy money on the tenants, inſtead of their perſonal attendance in the field, it became cuſtomary to allow women to inherit, in failure of male iſſue. We have already obſerved, that formerly the kings of this country might levy an aid on the ſubjects for the marriage of their eldeſt daughters: the great barons exerciſed the ſame power over their tenants, and, on the marriage of their eldeſt daughters, obliged each of them to pay what amounted to above five per cent. of their yearly income. But this was only a ſmall part of the oppreſſion theſe tenants laboured under: if any of them preſumed to give his daughter in marriage without the conſent of his lord, he was liable to an action for defrauding the lord of his property, as the lord had a right to chuſe her a huſband, to make that huſband pay a fine or premium, for providing him with a wife. But beſides this, it is believed, that the lord claimed a right of a more extraordinary nature, that of enjoying the wife of his tenant the firſt night; a claim which, however improbable it may ſeem to us, is not altogether incredible, when we conſider the exorbitant abuſe of power which marked with ſo much infamy the times we are ſpeaking of.

But beſides theſe laws, which for the moſt part operate ſo as to hinder the fair ſex from getting into poſſeſſion of much property, the laws of marriage again divest them of ſuch property as they really are in poſſeſſion of; by marriage, all the goods and chattel which belonged to the woman become veſted in the huſband, and he has the ſame power over

them as she had before, while they were her sole and absolute property. When the wife, however, is possessed of a real estate in land, the power which the husband acquires over it is not so extensive, he only gains a right to the rents and profits arising out of it during the continuance of the marriage; but if a living child is born to him, though it should die in a very short time, he becomes, in that case, tenant for life, by the courtesy of the country: if there happens to be no child, then at the demise of the wife the estate goes to her heirs at law; but the property of her goods and chattels devolves upon the husband, who has the sole and absolute power of disposing of them according to his pleasure.

Every married woman is considered as a minor, and cannot do any deed which affects her real or personal property without the consent of her husband, and if she does any such deed, it is not valid, and the husband may claim the property she disposed of, as if no such disposal had been made. As a married woman cannot dispose of her property while living, so neither does the law give her that power at her death. In the statute of wills, she is expressly prohibited from devising land, and even from bequeathing goods and chattels without the leave of her husband; because all such goods and chattels are, without any limitation, his sole and absolute property; whether they were such as the wife brought along with her at the marriage, or such as she acquired even by her labour and industry afterward.

The laws of this country not only deny to a married woman the power of making a will, but also

dissolve and render of no effect upon her marriage all and every will she may have made while single ; and even when a single woman who has made her will marries, and her husband dies, the will she had made, being invalidated by her marriage, does not recover its validity by the husband's death. If a husband and wife are jointly possessed of houses and lands, which are settled upon the survivor, if the husband destroys himself, his wife shall not have the half that belonged to him ; it become the property of the crown, as a compensation for the loss of a subject. When a husband and wife agree to live separate, and the husband covenants to give her so much a year, if at any time he offers to be reconciled and to take her home, upon her refusal, he shall not any longer be obliged to pay her a separate maintenance. If a legacy be paid to a married woman who lives separate from her husband, the husband may file a bill in chancery to oblige the person who paid it to his wife to pay it again to him with interest. If a wife proves insane, the husband, as her proper guardian, has a right to confine her in his own house, or in a private mad house ; but should the husband not be inclined to release her when her senses return, a court of equity will give her that relief which the husband denies. The power which a husband has over the person of his wife does not seem perfectly settled by the laws of this country ; it is nevertheless certain, that she is not to go abroad, nor to leave his house and family, without his approbation ; but what coercive methods he may make use of to restrain her from so doing, or whether he may proceed any farther than to admonition and denying her money, seems a point not altogether agreed upon.

When a wife is injured in her person or in her property, so limited is her power, that she cannot bring an action for redress without the consent and approbation of her husband, nor any way but in his name; if, however, such husband has abjured the realm, or is banished from it, he is considered as dead in law, and his wife in that case may sue for redress in her own name and authority. When a husband and wife are outlawed, and the wife appears in court without her husband, she cannot have the outlawry taken off, because she is considered only as a part of the object against which the outlawry was issued. When a husband becomes bankrupt, and is suspected of having dealt fraudulently with his creditors, the commissioners of the bankruptcy may summon his wife before them, examine her concerning his affairs, and commit her to prison if she either refuses to answer such questions as are put to her, or answers them in a doubtful manner. When a widow is endowed of certain lands and tenements, and sells them, the heir at law may not only recover them of the purchaser, but also refuse to restore them back to the widow, or to pay her any dower in their stead. By the laws of England, a father only is empowered to exercise a rightful authority over his children, and no power is conferred on the mother, only so far as to oblige these children to consider her as a person entitled to duty and a reverential regard.

Besides the limitations and restrictions which the laws of this country have laid upon the fair sex, it is necessary for the good of society that punishments should be annexed to their crimes as well as to those committed by us; those punishments are for the most part nearly the same in equal degrees of delinquency

in either sex, a few cases, however, are excepted. A woman guilty of high-treason is not punished in the same manner as a man; for this crime, a man is condemned to be hanged up, taken down alive, and his bowels taken out, and his body divided into quarters. A woman is condemned to be drawn to the place of execution, and there burnt to death. Condemnation to the flames is obliging the criminal to suffer a death of all others the most tremendous and terrible, and has been seldom inflicted in Europe but by bigoted priests and relentless inquisitors; the laws of England, however, reckoning high-treason and the murder of a husband equal to heresy, condemn to the flames her who is guilty of either, supposing that a punishment too exemplary cannot be held out to deter from the commission of such unnatural crimes. In Scotland, the woman who murders her husband is only hung as a common felon. In all the capital punishments of the sex, the laws of Britain lay it down as a maxim, that decency is not to be violated; we wish the same delicacy was observed in those which are only intended for the reformation of the culprit; but whipping at the cart's tail, as practised over all England, is often a shameful instance of the contrary.

Keeping a house for the purpose of prostitution, being a nuisance to the neighbourhood, and subversive of the peace and order of society, may be punished by subjecting the lady abbess to labour, to bodily correction, or to fine and imprisonment at the pleasure of the court. In the protectorship of Cromwell, wilful adultery was capital, and keeping a brothel, or repeatedly committing fornication, were felony without benefit of clergy. At present, adultery is only punishable in the spiritual court by cer-

tain penances, and in the civil courts by divorce and loss of dower. Adultery was in Scotland for several centuries punishable by death; and even Mary, queen of Scots, a lady, if not belied by fame, no way remarkable for conjugal fidelity, published some of the severest edicts against her sisterhood of sinners; but these severities, at last, in Scotland as well as in England, and the laws respecting adultery, are now in both kingdoms nearly upon an equal footing. For a variety of the other crimes committed by the sex against chastity, decency, and decorum, the laws have hardly devised any punishment, leaving the unhappy delinquent to the stings of conscience, the loss of character, the contempt of the virtuous, and the vengeance of offended heaven.

To this short account of punishments, we shall add an inconvenience to which the widowed part of the sex are liable in England, originally brought upon the whole by the indiscretion of a few.

When a husband dies, and either leaves no children, or only daughters who are by the nature of an entail cut off from inheriting his estate, it has sometimes happened, that his widow, though not really pregnant, has declared herself so, and at last imposed a spurious heir on the family, in prejudice of the real heir at law. To prevent such abuse, the statutes concerning widows, allow a woman forty weeks after the death of her husband, as the time for pregnancy, and if she is not delivered in that time, the child is deemed illegitimate; but as this is far from being a sufficient security against all fraud and imposture, they further empower the heir at law, as soon as the widow shall declare herself pregnant, to have her examined by a jury of matrons,

and if they declare she is not pregnant, the heir may immediately enter upon his estate ; but if they declare that she is pregnant, then the heir, to prevent all fraud and imposition, may obtain an order from the court of Common Pleas, directing the sheriff of the county where she resides to confine her in a house, the doors of which shall be well guarded, and access denied to all improper persons ; to cause her to be every day examined by some of the jury of matrons, and also to order, that some of them be present at the birth, to prevent all collusion, and declare whether the child of which she is delivered be a male or female ; such treatment, of a person guilty of no crime, in a country where liberty is the boasted prerogative, may justly be deemed a peculiar hardship, and as such is, if possible, scarcely ever practised, except where depravity of manners, or particular malevolence against the heir at law make it necessary ; and even then, it is conducted with the utmost caution, and care is taken that the woman shall have nothing to complain of that is not absolutely necessary to prevent the dreaded imposition on the family.

THE END.

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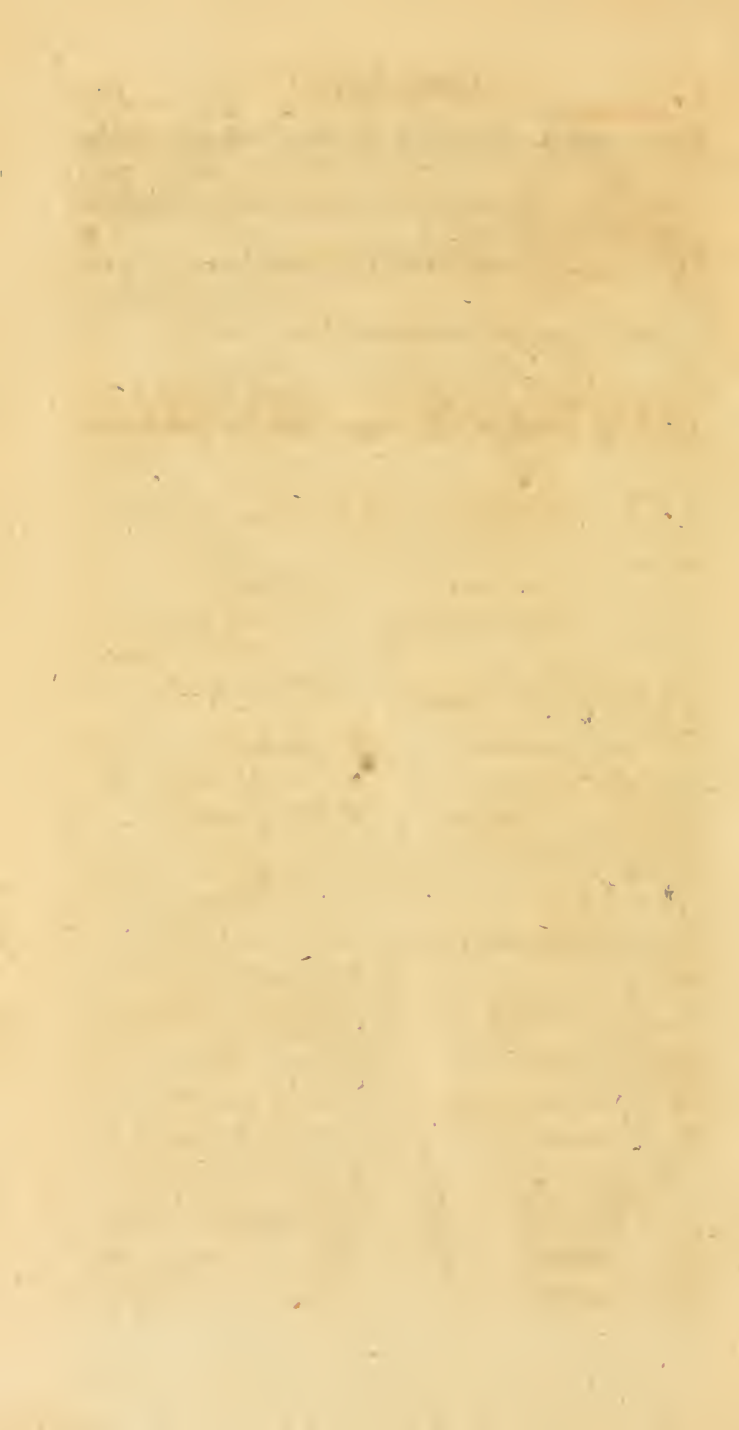
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